

Italian Heavy Cruisers of WWII



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# *Italian Heavy Cruisers of World War Two*

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*Trieste, ahead of Bolzano and three of the Zara class cruisers, photographed from Trento, about 1940.*

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# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser *Trento*

**8 February 1925:** The heavy cruiser *Trento* was laid down at the Cantieri Navali Orlando shipyard in Livorno.

**4 September 1927:** *Trento's* scheduled launch was interrupted by sabotage. Anti-fascist shipworkers, who had mixed sand into the tallow and grease on the shipway, caused the sliding hull to stop just short of the water. Prominent fascist officials and members of the Italian royal family were among the disappointed guests.

**4 October 1927:** After repeated attempts by the Orlando shipyard to complete the failed launch, the passenger steamer *Principe di Udine* was employed to haul *Trento* off the shipway into Livorno Harbor.

**3 April 1929:** *Trento* was commissioned.

**11 May 1929:** *Trento* was flagship of newly formed Cruiser Division.

**16 May-4 June 1929:** *Trento* and sistership *Trieste* cruised the northern Mediterranean, stopping in Barcelona before returning to La Spezia.

**23 July-10 October 1929:** South American cruise, ports of call included Sao Vicente in the Cape Verde Islands, Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Ilha Grande, Bahia, Las Palmas, and Tangiers.

**15 September-21 November 1930:** *Trento* cruised the eastern Mediterranean and the Tyrrhenian, docking finally at La Spezia.

**Early Summer 1931:** Underwent a refit at La Spezia, replacing the original tripod foremast with a sturdier pentapod construction in order to reduce vibration to the fire control top.

**28 January 1932:** *Trento* joined the destroyer *Espero* at Gaeta, and from there the two ships steamed to the western Pacific in order to protect Italian interests in war torn China, and to bolster the Italian Far East Division, composed of the cruiser *Libia*, and gunboats *Caboto* and *Carlotto*. A contingent of marines from the San Marco Battalion was also embarked.

**4 March 1932:** Arrived at Shanghai after visits to Port Said, Aden, Colombo, and Singapore.

**26 April-1 May 1932:** *Trento* also visited Japan, docking at Nagasaki while on "China Station."

**14 May 1932:** Departed Shanghai for Italy, retracing her outward bound route home.

**30 June 1932:** *Trento* arrived at La Spezia.

**6-7 July 1933:** Fleet review in the Gulf of Naples for Benito Mussolini features six of the seven Italian Washington Treaty heavy cruisers he so prizes.

**2 December 1933:** *Trento* is named flagship of the First Squadron's Second Division.

**23-26 June 1934:** Visited the port of Durazzo (now Durrës) in Albania.

**1 July 1934:** Flagship of the newly designated Third Naval Division (formerly the Second Division).

**8-20 March 1935:** *Trento* cruised the eastern Mediterranean, stopping at Rhodes and Leros and returning to Augusta in Sicily.

**18 June 1935:** Flag of the Third Naval Division transferred to *Trieste*.

**27 November 1936:** *Trento* participated in the Italian naval review held in the Gulf of Naples honoring the Hungarian regent, Admiral Miklos von Horthy.

**27 January 1937:** Relinquished flag of the Third Division to *Trieste* once again.

**10-12 March 1937:** *Trento* steamed to Libya, escorting Mussolini aboard the heavy cruiser *Pola* on a brief colonial cruise, stopping at Benghazi, Tripoli, and Ras Lanuf.

**5 May 1938:** *Trento* participated in Naval Review H in the Gulf of Naples honoring German chancellor Adolf Hitler on his official state visit to Italy.

**17 May 1939:** Took part in a naval review for King Paul of Yugoslavia in the Gulf of Naples.

**5-19 June 1939:** *Trento* and other Italian warships gathered at Livorno for festivities surrounding the first observation of Navy Day (10 June).

**9-29 July 1939:** Departed La Spezia for an Eastern Mediterranean cruise, visiting the ports of Tripoli, Tobruk, Rhodes, and Leros before returning to Taranto.

**October-December 1939:** *Trento* underwent more than two months of refitting, emerging with increased light armament and funnel caps that reduce smoke interference with bridge operations. This changed her appearance to something more like that of the heavy cruiser

*Bolzano*.

**10 June 1940:** Italy's entry into World War Two found *Trento* at Messina, once again the Third Division flagship.

**11 June 1940:** The division put to sea early that evening, and joined forces with the Sixth Division the following day to patrol and mine the Sicilian Channel.

**8-9 July 1940:** The Third and First Divisions, returning to Taranto from an uneventful convoy escort to Libya, are east of Sicily when they and a heavily escorted British convoy headed to Malta became aware of each other. *Trento* came under fierce aerial attack during the ensuing Battle of Punta Stilo, and exchanged fire with Royal Navy cruisers and battleships arrayed against the Italians. The damage to either side was not great, and no ships were lost in this inconclusive encounter. After the battle more than 120 Italian aircraft, flying from mainland bases, attacked the British fleet and, erroneously, Italian warships also, despite their white painted forecas-tles. Hereafter, diagonal red stripes are added to all Italian ships' white foredecks in order for Italian aircraft to identify them more readily.

**30 July 1940:** *Trento* escorted a convoy to Libya.

**1 August 1940:** Returned to base at Messina without incident.

**31 August-2 September 1940:** In response to the British Operation Hats, *Trento* put to sea from Messina, running into heavy weather and eventually reaching Taranto.

**14 October 1940:** Once again operating from Messina, *Trento* joined the Eleventh Destroyer Squadron and the First Torpedo Squadron in a fierce night action against British ships, later weathering an aerial assault before making safe harbor at Messina.

**21 October 1940:** *Trento* transferred to Taranto.

**11-12 November 1940:** *Trento* was present for the British Royal Navy's fabled night aerial attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto. Docked with *Trieste*, *Bolzano*, and destroyers in Mar Piccolo, the inner harbor, she sustained damage only to the port forward twin 10 cm mount, hit by an unexploded bomb.

**26-28 November 1940:** *Trento* was involved in the



Battle of Cape Teulada, also known as Battle of Cape Spartivento, trading fire with British cruisers and fighting off an enemy air attack before making port at Naples. All components of the Second Squadron were poised to intercept British naval forces converging near Sardinia from Alexandria and Gibraltar, and the Third Division ran into positioning problems while trying to move into optimum firing positions.

**12-13 March 1941:** The Third Division escorted a fast convoy comprising transatlantic liners *Conte Rosso*, *Marco Polo*, and *Victoria*, and accompanied also by destroyers *Aviere*, *Corazziere*, and *Carabiniere*.

**27-29 March 1941:** *Trento* and the Third Division departed Messina at dawn, rendezvous with the battleship *Vittorio Veneto* and the First Division to take part in Operation Gaudio (the Italian name for the Greek island Gavdhos), a large Italian Navy offensive in the vicinity of Crete. Early on the 28th, they returned fire off Gavdhos against Royal Navy cruisers and came under a British air assault. *Vittorio Veneto*, the squadron flagship, was torpedoed on the afternoon of 28th, and by early evening both the Third and First Divisions close in around her and turn back for Taranto, but that night the First Division cruisers are destroyed in the Battle of Cape Matapan.

**6 May-5 August 1941:** *Trento* transferred to La Spezia for extensive yard work, returning to Messina at the end of that period.

**8-9 November 1941:** *Trento* and the Third Division escorted the "Duisburg" convoy to Tripoli, which came under well co-ordinated radar guided attack by the British Force K out of Malta.

**21 November 1941:** During convoy escort duty to Libya, *Trento* successfully fought off an air attack.

**16-17 December 1941:** Part of Italian naval

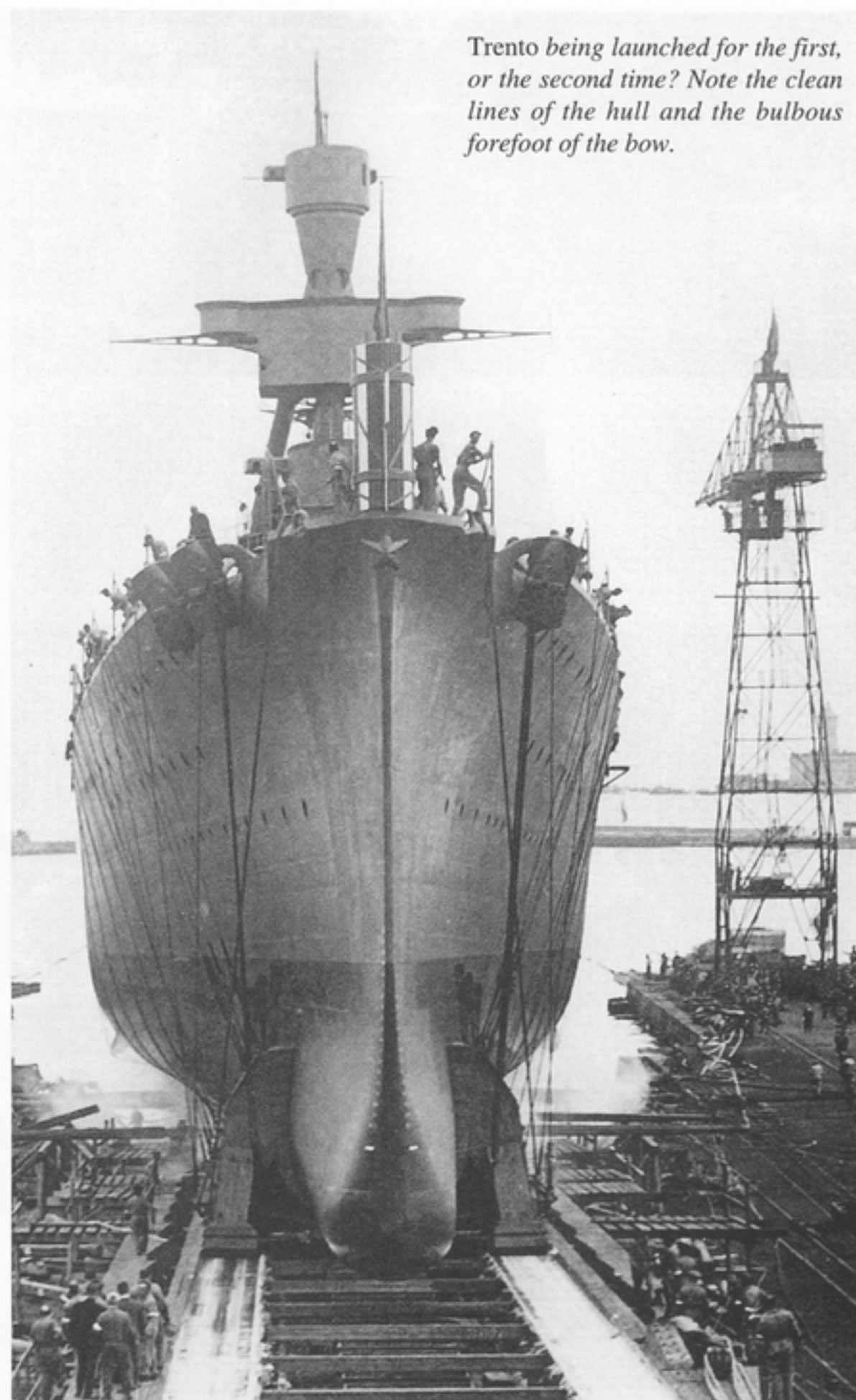
operation M. 42, *Trento* helped escort two convoys headed for Benghazi and Tripoli. The Italian force, comprised of the battleships *Littorio*, *Andrea Doria*, *Caio Duilio*, *Giulio Cesare*, cruisers *Gorizia*, *Trento*, *Duca d'Aosta*, *Montecuccoli*, and *Attendolo*, ran into a Royal Navy squadron on the 17th, provoking the First Battle of Sirte Gulf.

**22-23 March 1942:** *Trento* joined battleship *Littorio* and her escorts in a convoy interception that would become the Second Battle of Sirte Gulf, during which *Littorio* and cruisers *Trento*, *Gorizia*, and *Bande Nere* engaged the British convoy's escort of four light cruisers and eighteen destroyers in increasingly heavy weather. *Trento* attempted to aid foundering destroyers *Lanciere* and *Scirocco*, but they both sank before her arrival.

**14 June 1942:** The eastern Mediterranean naval battle during British Operation Harpoon and Vigorous was *Trento's* last. Steaming from Taranto with battleships *Littorio* and *Vittorio Veneto*, and cruisers *Gorizia*, *Garibaldi*, and *Duca d'Aosta*, *Trento* was part of a force hoping to wreak havoc on a British convoy on its way to Malta from Alexandria (Operation Harpoon).

**15 June 1942:** In the central Ionian Sea at 0500, an RAF Beaufighter scored a torpedo hit on *Trento*, igniting a huge fire in the forward boiler rooms, stopping the cruiser. Several destroyers set up a smoke screen and attempted to take the damaged cruiser in tow, but at 0910 a torpedo from the submarine HMS *Umbra* struck *Trento*, touching off devastating explosions in the forward magazines that sank the warship in minutes.

**18 October 1946:** *Trento* was stricken from the Italian naval register.

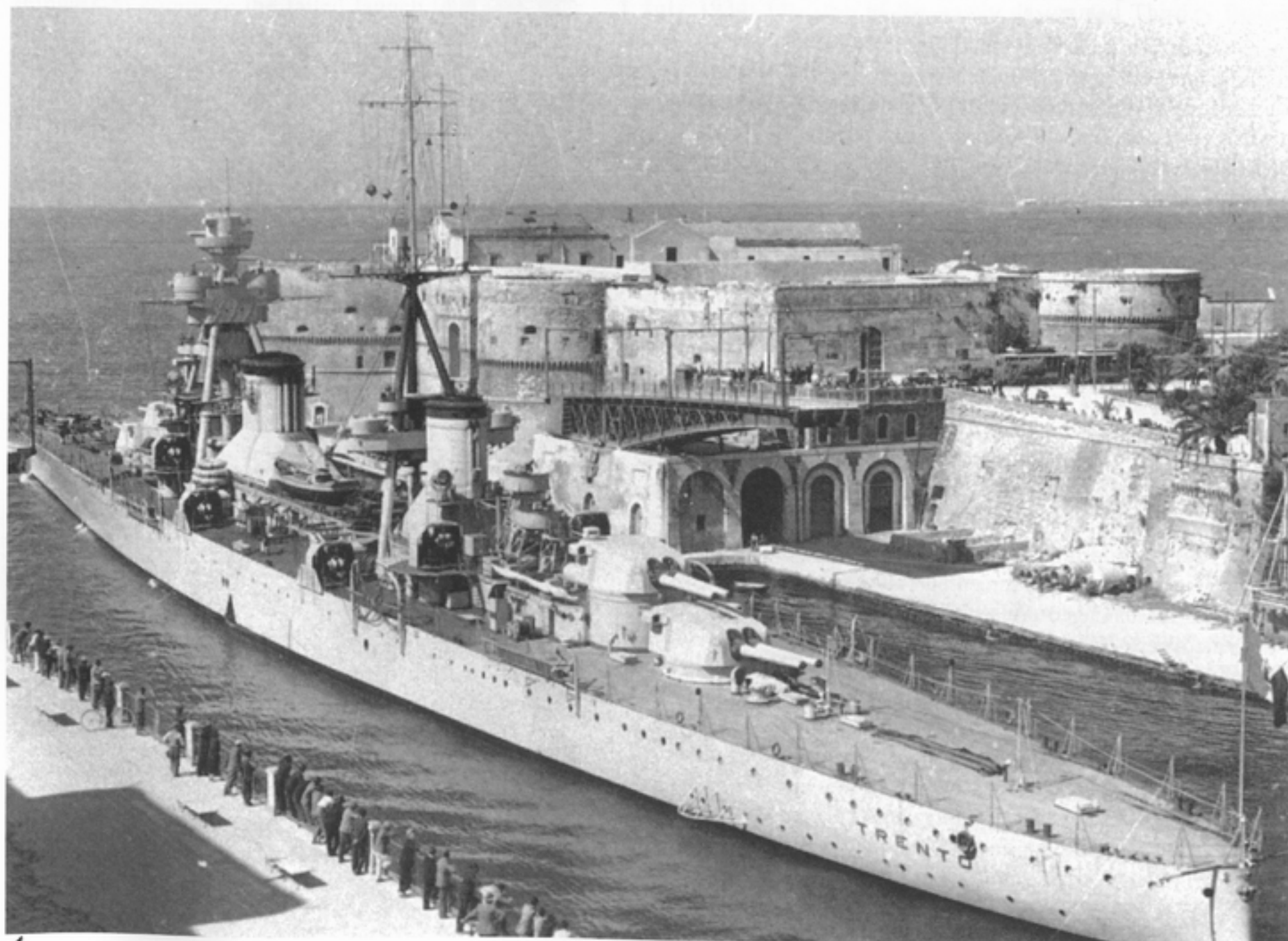


*Trento being launched for the first, or the second time? Note the clean lines of the hull and the bulbous forefoot of the bow.*



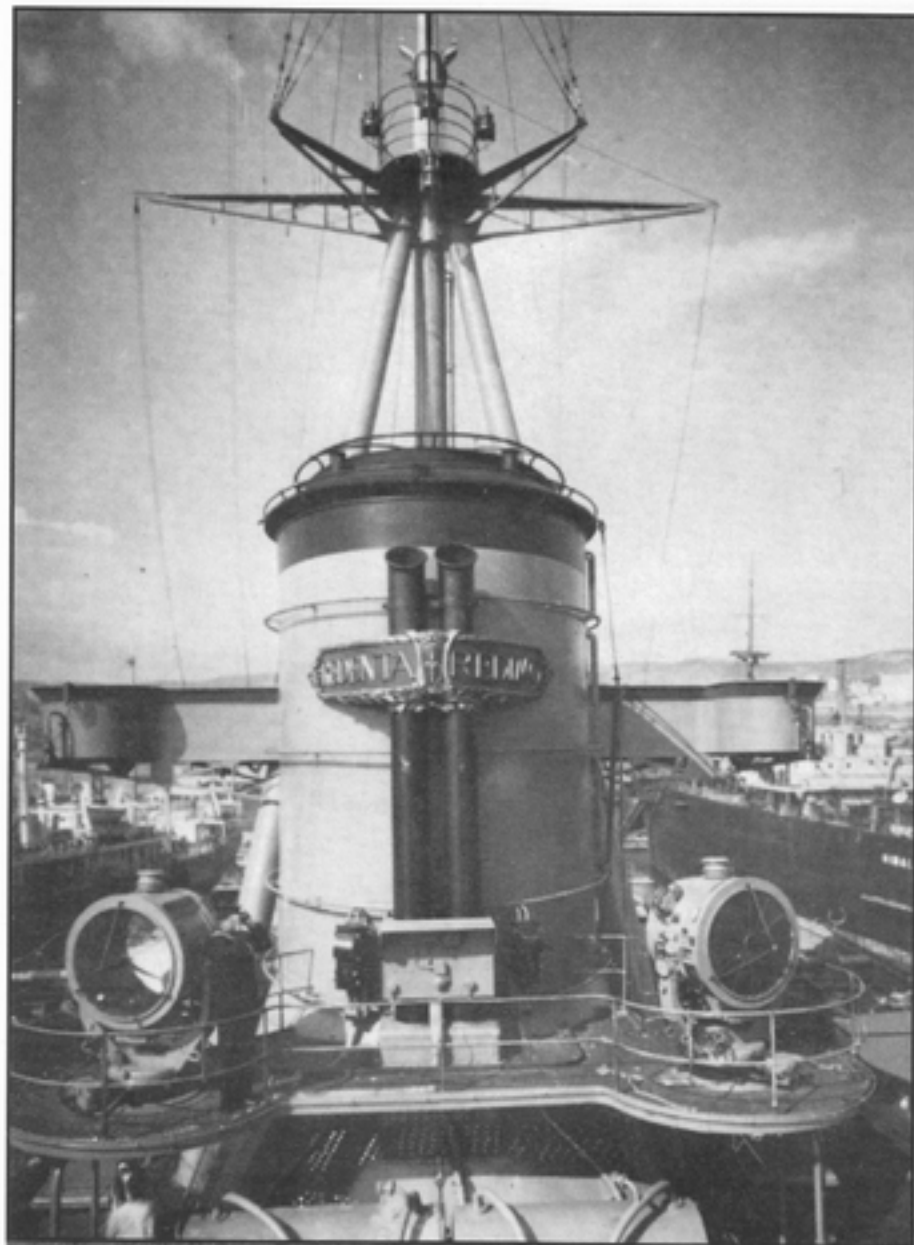


*The upper photograph is of the Trento undergoing trials prior to final fitting out, early in 1929. Note the missing secondary armament.*



*The image to the left is of the Trento transiting the canal to the Mar Grande, the outer harbor at Taranto. Many warships of the Italian Navy were photographed at this location. This canal leads to the Mar Piccolo, the inner harbor at Taranto, which was used by the cruisers as an anchorage on many occasions.*





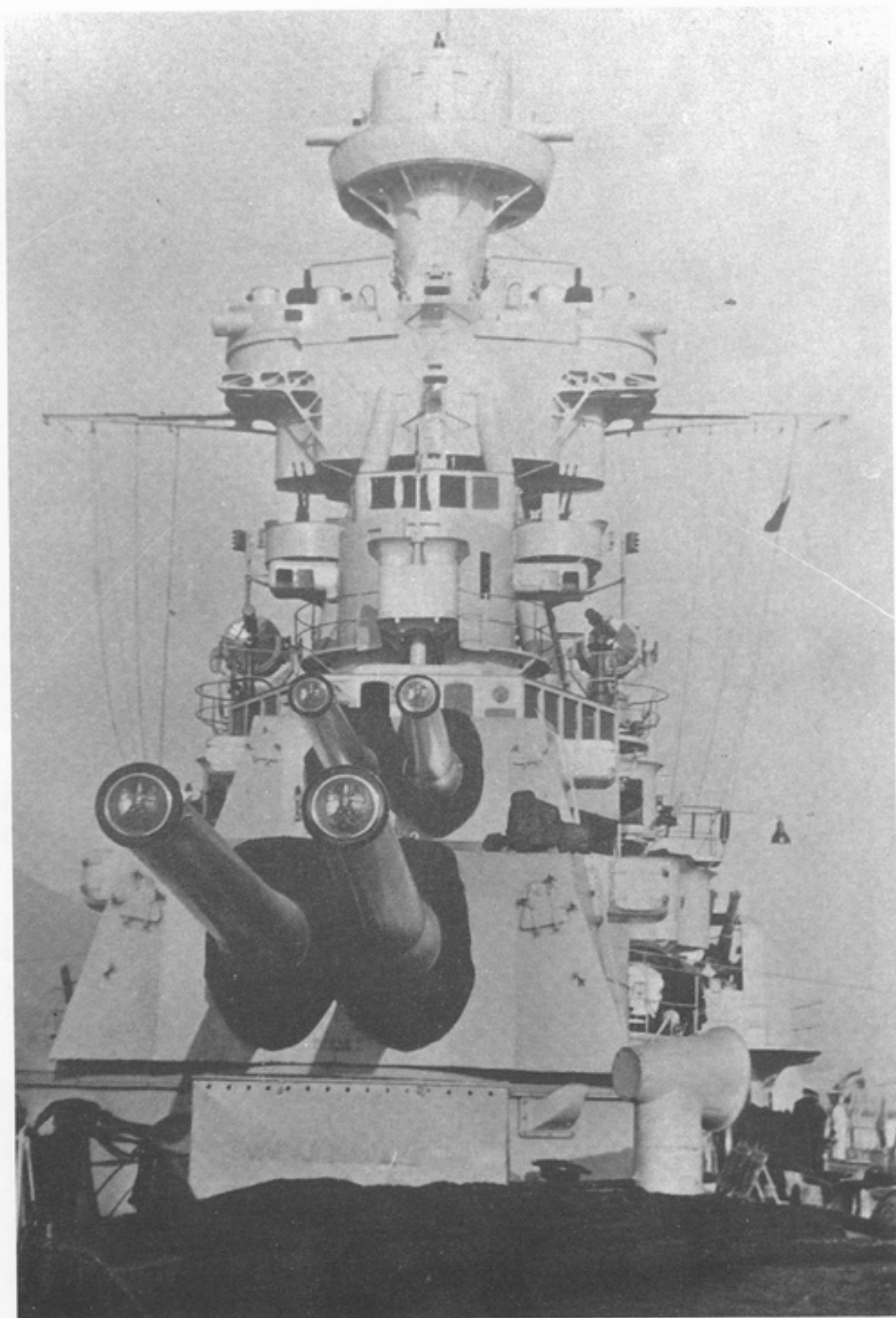
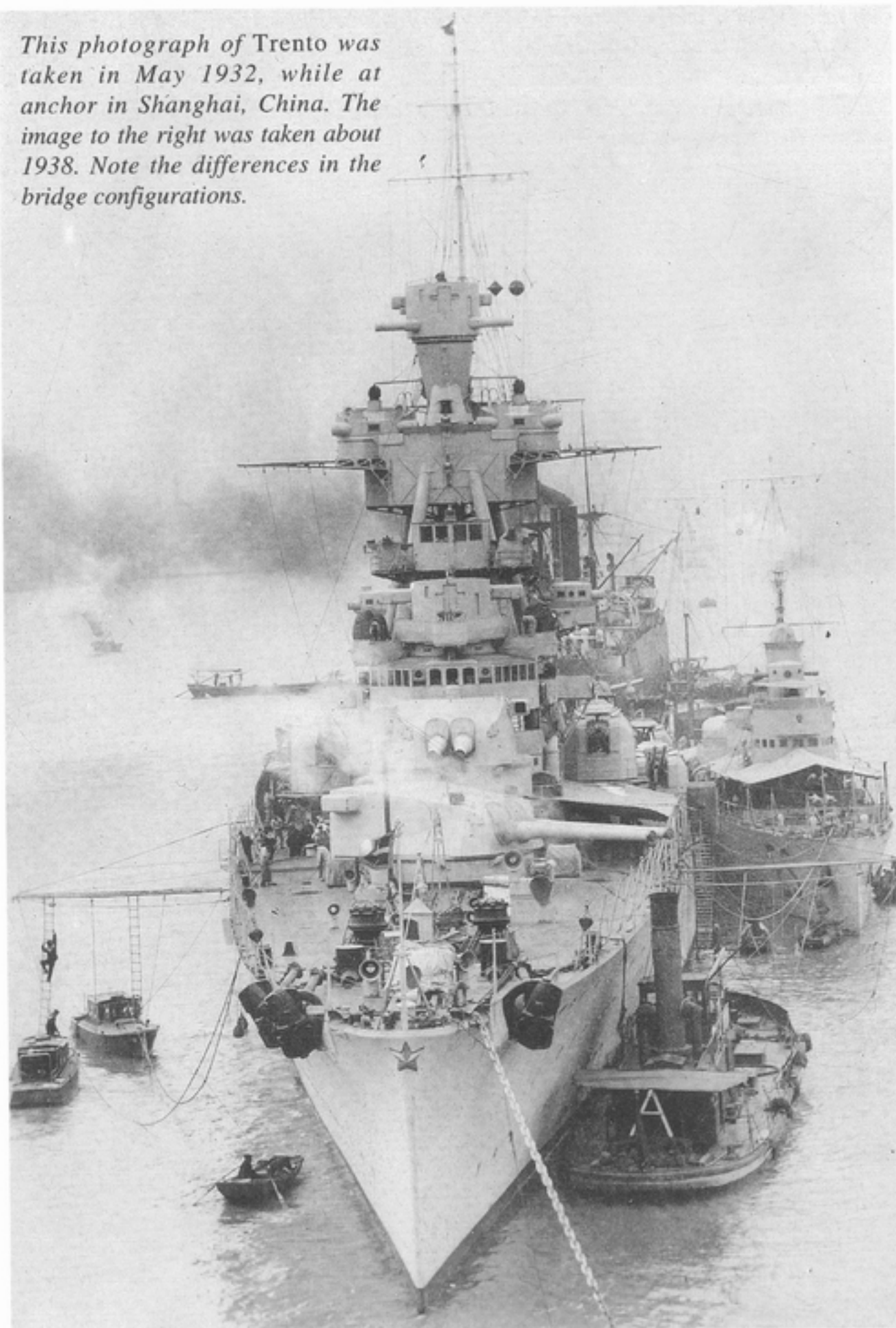
*The smaller image to the left is of the aft funnel on the Trento, looking forward. This photograph was taken just prior to her commissioning, as the rangefinders on the platform just ahead of the funnel were not yet fitted.*

*The photograph below of the Trento was taken about 1936. Note that her steel decks were painted dark gray at this time and that the wood deck aft was left in its natural state.*

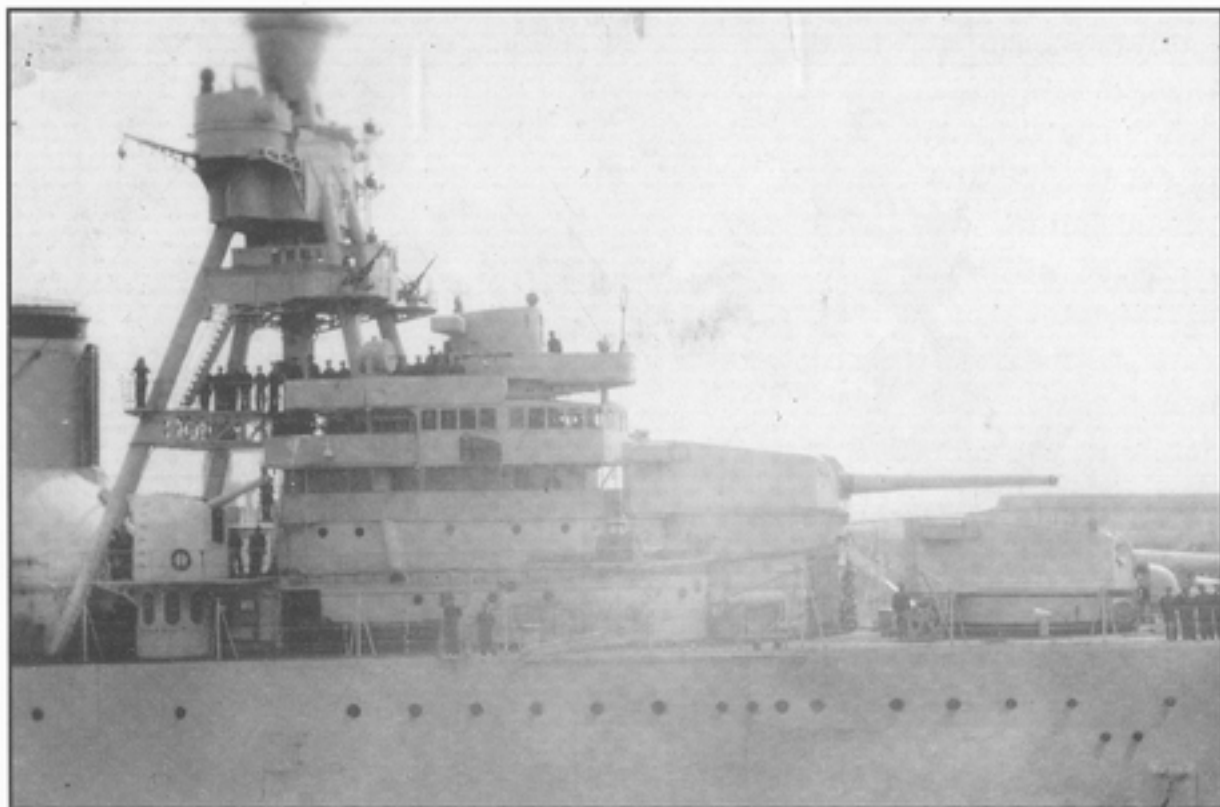




*This photograph of Trento was taken in May 1932, while at anchor in Shanghai, China. The image to the right was taken about 1938. Note the differences in the bridge configurations.*





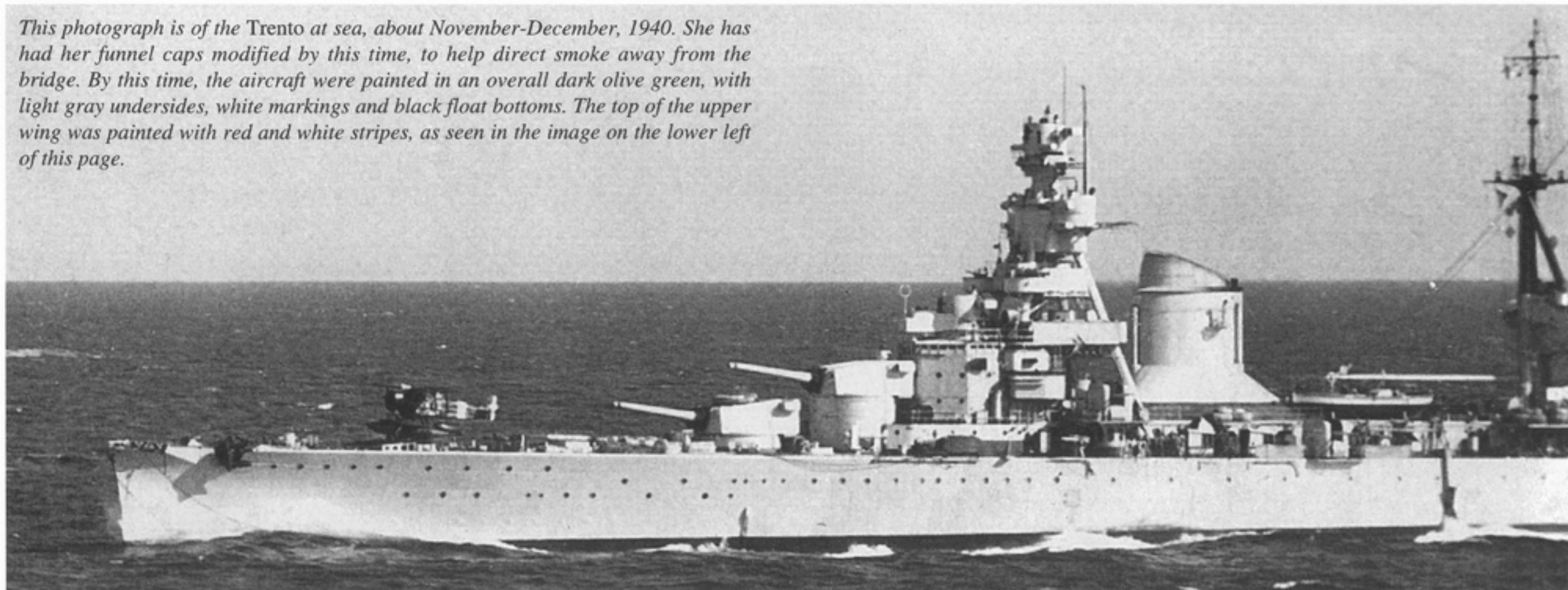


*Two additional photographs taken while Trento was dispatched to the Far East. Again, she is shown while at anchor in Shanghai, China. These photographs were taken from the American cruiser USS Houston CA-30, passing close alongside, while a naval intelligence officer snapped a series of photos.*





*This photograph is of the Trento at sea, about November-December, 1940. She has had her funnel caps modified by this time, to help direct smoke away from the bridge. By this time, the aircraft were painted in an overall dark olive green, with light gray undersides, white markings and black float bottoms. The top of the upper wing was painted with red and white stripes, as seen in the image on the lower left of this page.*



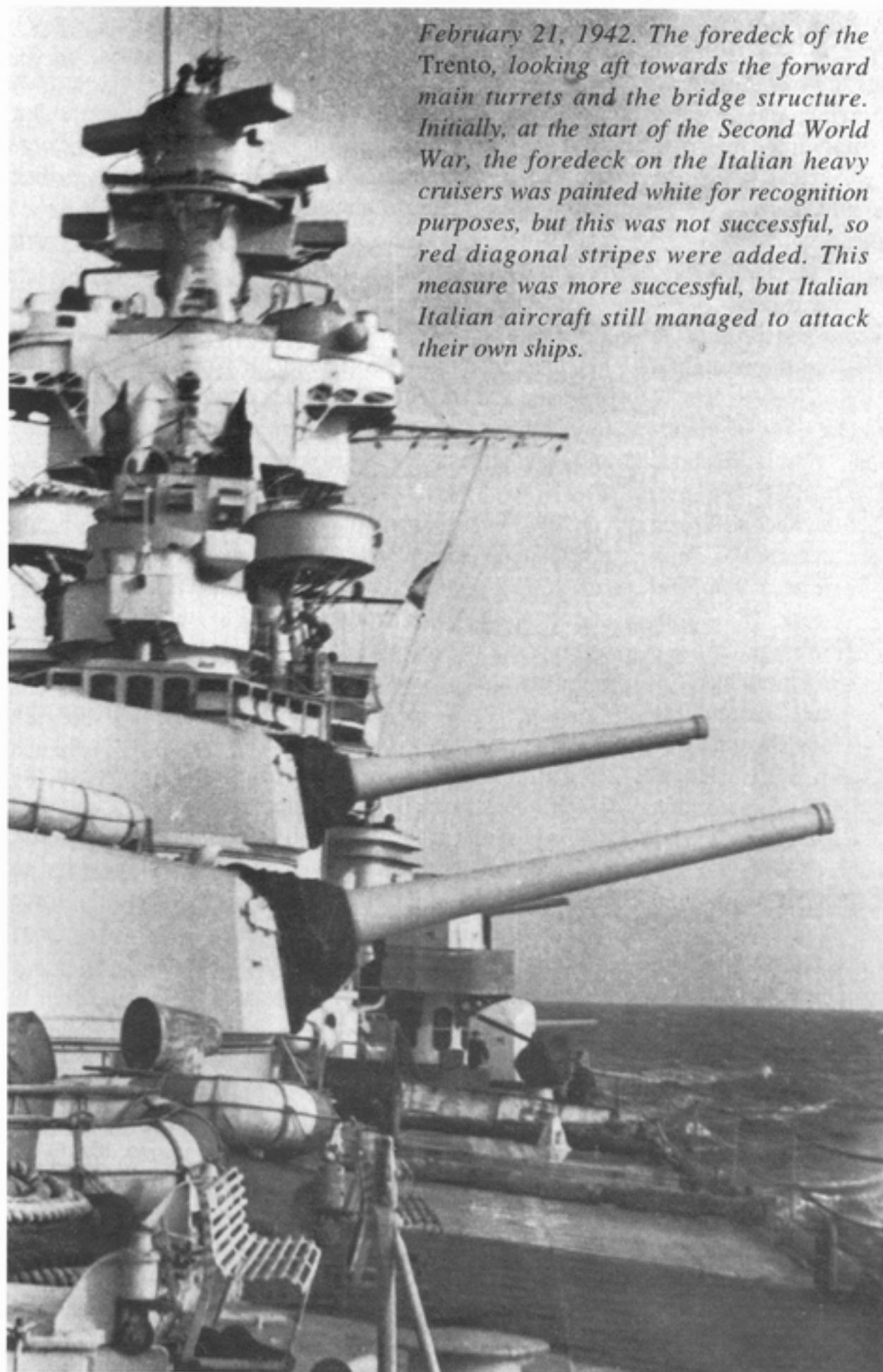
*The image below is of one of the Ro-43 floatplanes being launched from the catapult on Trento's bow, taken September 7, 1940. Note the offset aircraft hangar cover on the deck, as well as the red and white air recognition stripes.*



*The image below is of one of the RO-43 floatplanes on the catapult on Trento's bow, taken February 21, 1942. Note the air recognition stripes on the deck.*









# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser Trieste

**22 June 1925:** The heavy cruiser *Trieste* was laid down at the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino shipyard in Trieste.

**24 October 1926:** Launched.

**21 December 1928:** *Trieste* was commissioned.

**16 May-4 June 1929:** Forming the Italian Navy's new Cruiser Division with sister-ship *Trento*, *Trieste* cruised the northern Mediterranean.

**1 October 1929:** *Trieste* was designated flagship of the First Naval Squadron.

**Mid-Summer 1931:** Following *Trento*'s refit at La Spezia, *Trieste* entered the yard as well, and had her foremast rebuilt from a tripod to a pentapod structure.

**6-7 July 1933:** *Trieste* joined the other six Treaty cruisers in a parade before Il Duce in the Gulf of Naples.

**2 December 1933:** *Trieste* joined *Trento* and *Bolzano* and formed the Second Division of the First Squadron.

**July 1934:** The Second Division changes numeration and became the Third Division of the Second Squadron, which it would remain to the end of World War II.

**18 June 1935:** Flagship status of the Third Division of the Second Squadron was transferred from *Trento* to *Trieste*.

**28 November 1936:** A secret protocol was signed by the Italian government committing its armed forces to the aid and material support of the Spanish Nationalists, whose insurgent war against Republican Spain began 17 June 1936. *Trieste* and other Italian warships became involved to varying degrees in the Spanish Civil War.

**10-12 March 1937:** *Trieste* joined Mussolini's colonial cruise to Libya.

**7 June 1937:** *Trieste* participated in a naval review on the occasion of a state visit by Germany's Marshal Werner von Blomberg.

**15 February 1938:** *Trieste* became flagship of the Second Squadron.

**5 May 1938:** *Trieste* took part in Naval Review H in the Gulf of Naples for Adolf Hitler's state visit.

**12 October 1938:** *Trieste* and the Tenth Destroyer Squadron departed Messina for the southern Spanish port of Cadiz.

**15 October 1938:** The warships rendezvoused at Cadiz

with the Italian steamers *Sardegna*, *Liguria*, *Calabria*, and *Piemonte*, which arrived the previous day to carry 10,000 Italian Legionnaire home to Italy after their service in the Spanish Civil War.

**16 October 1938:** The convoy departed Cadiz.

**20 October 1938:** Arrived at Naples.

**17 May 1939:** *Trieste* was in the Gulf of Naples for a naval review in honor of King Paul of Yugoslavia.

**5-19 June 1939:** *Trieste* joined *Trento* and *Bolzano* at Livorno for the celebrations surrounding the inaugural Navy Day (10 June).

**October-December 1939:** *Trieste*, like *Trento*, underwent yard work, receiving light armament modifications and the same funnel caps as *Trento*.

**10 June 1940:** With Italy's entry into the Second World War, the Second Squadron flag was transferred to *Pola*, and the Third Division, comprised of *Trieste*, *Trento*, and *Bolzano*, had the flag transferred to *Trieste*. These four vessels patrolled north of Sicily, joined by light cruisers and two destroyer squadrons the following morning.

**31 August-2 September 1940:** *Trieste* and *Trento* put to sea from Messina, joined by units from Brindisi and Taranto in order to interfere with the British Royal Navy's Operation Hats, finally docking at Taranto after an inconclusive sortie in the midst of a bad squall.

**11-12 November 1940:** *Trieste*, anchored with *Bolzano* in Taranto's inner harbor Mar Piccolo, sustains no damage from the British air attack on the Italian fleet.

**26-28 November 1940:** During the Battle of Cape Teulada, *Trieste* engaged British warships. No damage was sustained.

**9 February 1941:** Participated in the Second Squadron's hunt for the British Navy's Force H after its successful bombardment of Genoa. No contact was made.

**12-13 March 1941:** Fast convoy escort duty.

**27 March 1941:** Began patrol of the eastern Mediterranean near Crete as part of Operation Gaudio.

**28 March 1941:** Italian battleship *Vittorio Veneto* and the Third Division engage British light cruisers *HMS Ajax*, *Orion*, *Gloucester*, and *HMAS Perth* in the morning off Gavdhos. The three Italian cruisers later came

under British air attack from 1520 to 1700, but were not hit. *Trieste* joined the torpedoed *Vittorio Veneto* and her escorts in repairing toward Taranto, missing the catastrophic encounter of *Zara*, *Pola* and *Fiume* with British battleships off Cape Matapan about midnight.

**29 March 1941:** *Trieste* and the damaged *Vittorio Veneto* made port at Taranto at 1530.

**24-30 April 1941:** *Trieste* and *Bolzano* escorted a convoy from Naples of German vessels *Marburg*, *Kibfels*, *Reichenfels*, and others, bound for North Africa. Heavy seas and the proximity of radar equipped enemy ships forced the convoy to take cover first in Palermo, Messina and then Augusta, before making landfall at Tripoli.

**24-27 May 1941:** *Trieste* and *Bolzano* escort another fast convoy, but just four hours out of Messina at 2045, the transatlantic liner *Conte Rosso* was sunk by the submarine *HMS Upholder*. On their return, the remainder of the convoy joined with another headed to Italy from Tripoli, again under the escort of the two cruisers.

**8-9 June 1941:** *Trieste* and *Bolzano* joined destroyers *Corazziere*, *Ascari*, and *Lanciere* in escorting the "Esperia" convoy to North Africa.

**25 June 1941:** *Trieste* and *Gorizia*, along with the Twelfth Destroyer Squadron, departed as escort for a fast convoy of the transatlantic liners *Oceania*, *Neptunia*, *Esperia*, and *Marco Polo*, which were all converted to troopships. At nightfall intense enemy air attacks force the convoy's retreat to Taranto.

**27 June 1941:** The convoy departed Taranto.

**29 June 1941:** The convoy successfully made Tripoli in the morning.

**30 June 1941:** The convoy was under heavy air attack in the port before departing Tripoli for Italy.

**1 July 1941:** Arrived at Taranto.

**16-20 July 1941:** *Trieste* and *Bolzano* joined destroyers *Ascari*, *Carabinieri*, and *Corazziere* in escorting a fast convoy comprising *Oceania*, *Neptunia*, and *Marco Polo* from Taranto to Tripoli and back.

**22-26 August 1941:** *Trieste* and *Bolzano*, with other Italian units, seek unsuccessfully to confront an anticipated Force H incursion, "Operation Mincemeat" in the



Tyrrhenian Sea.

**24-30 September 1941:** *Trieste* attempted without success to head off British naval units converging from Alexandria and Gibraltar to form the fighting force and convoys of "Operation Halberd".

**8-9 November 1941:** *Trieste* and the Third Division departed Messina as escorts of the Duisburg convoy, which overnight was destroyed by the cruisers and destroyers of the British Force K out of Malta.

**21 November 1941:** While escorting a convoy headed for Libya, *Trieste* was torpedoed at 2312 by *HMS Utmost*. Shortly thereafter the light cruiser *Duca degli Abruzzi* was successfully targeted by a torpedo bomber.

**22 November 1941:** Both ships are able to make Messina by 0800, escorted by the light cruiser *Garibaldi* and destroyer *Bersagliere*.

**12-14 August 1942:** During the mid-August operations, the Third Division of *Trieste*, *Gorizia*, and *Bolzano* departed Messina, escorted by destroyers *Aviere*, *Geniere*, *Camicia Nera*, *Legionario*, *Ascari*, *Corsaro*, and *Grecale* in action against the Royal Navy, during which cruisers *Attendolo* and *Bolzano* were torpedoed. *Attendolo* limped back to Messina, but *Bolzano* was beached on the small island of Panarea.

**10 April 1943:** While in the Sardinian harbor of La Maddalena, *Trieste* was bombed by USAAF B-24s at 1345, and by 1613 she capsized to starboard.

**18 October 1946:** *Trieste* was stricken from the Italian naval register.

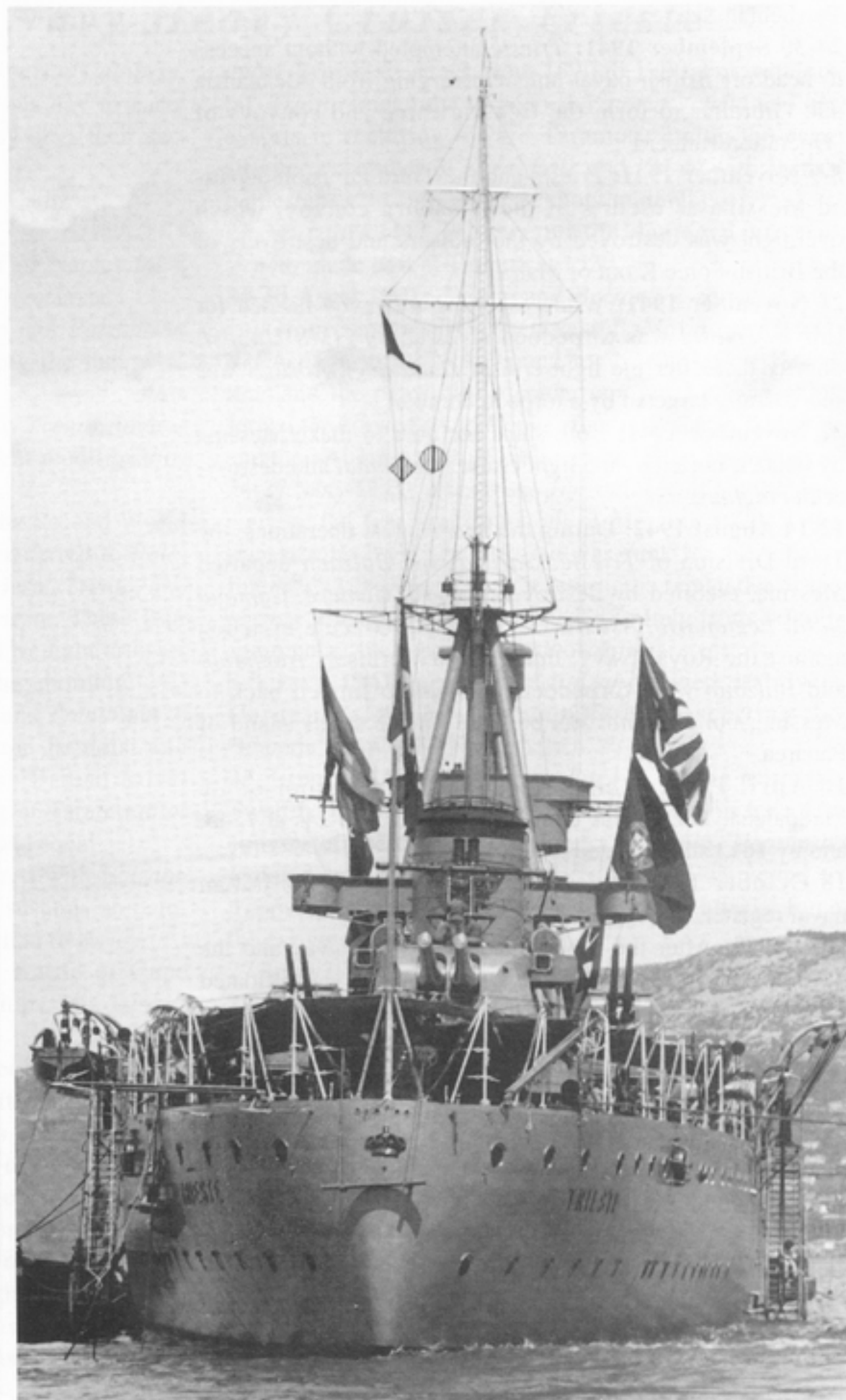
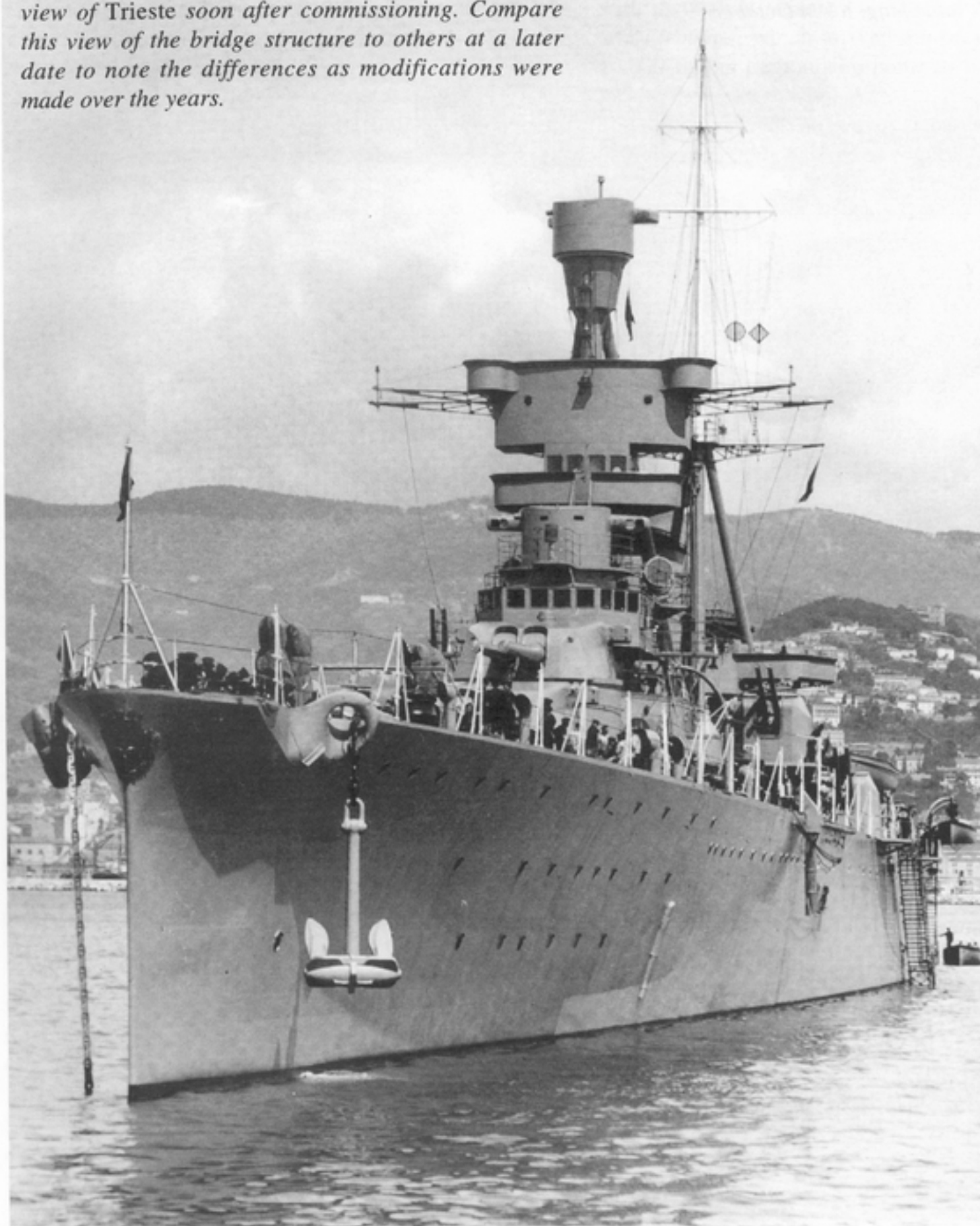
**1950-1959:** After the superstructure was cut away and the wreck of the *Trieste* was made watertight, she was refloated at La Maddalena and towed, still capsized, to La Spezia, intended for the scrapyard. After the hull was righted and drydocked, the powerplant was discovered to be in good working order, preserved over the years by tons of leaked fuel oil. The Spanish Navy, wishing to transform her to a light aircraft carrier, purchased what remained of *Trieste* and towed her first to Cartagena, then on to El Ferrol in 1952 for conversion. By 1956, the project was deemed too ambitious and costly, so the ex-*Trieste* was sold by the Armada Espanola, and reduced to scrap metal by 1959.

*Trieste under construction, just prior to launching, taken October 1926.*



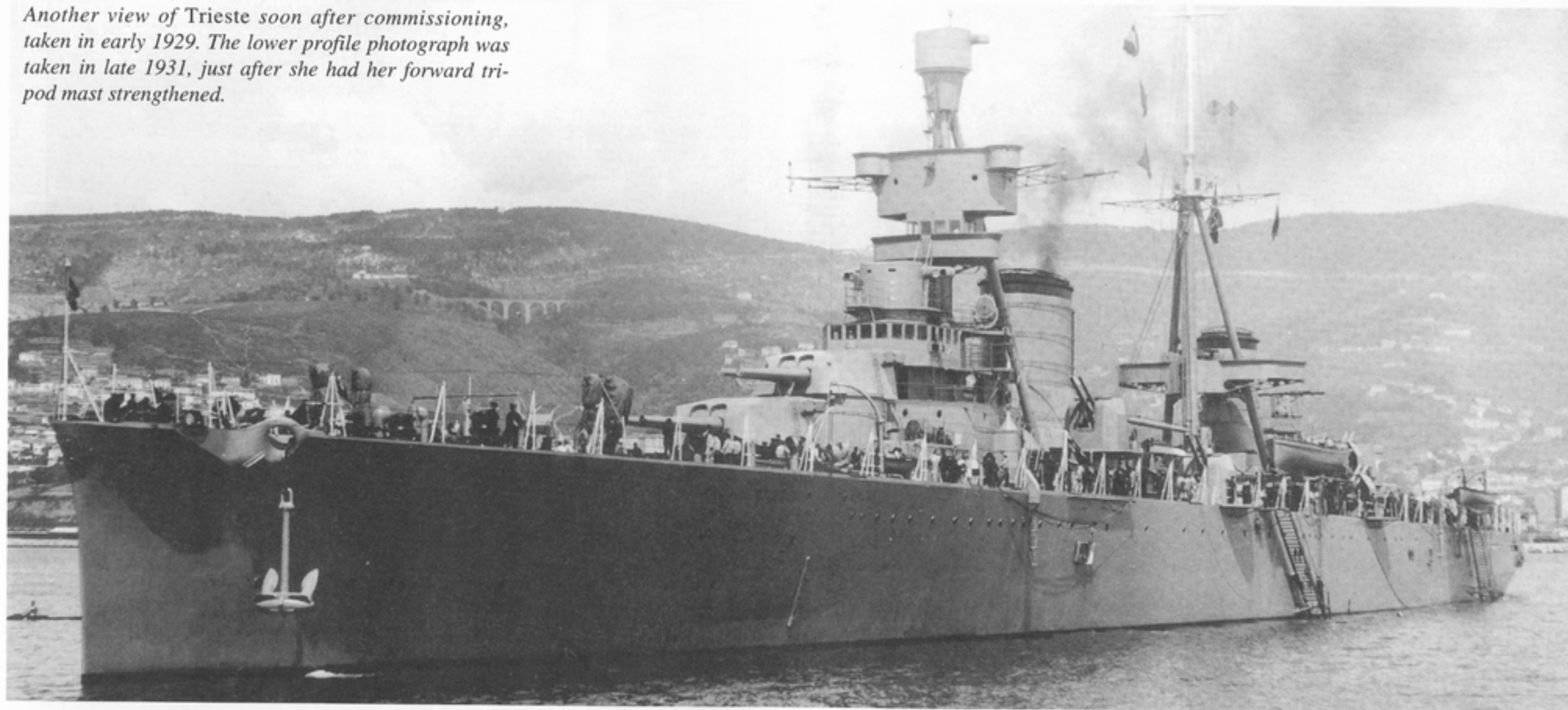


*The two photographs on this page are a bow and stern view of Trieste soon after commissioning. Compare this view of the bridge structure to others at a later date to note the differences as modifications were made over the years.*

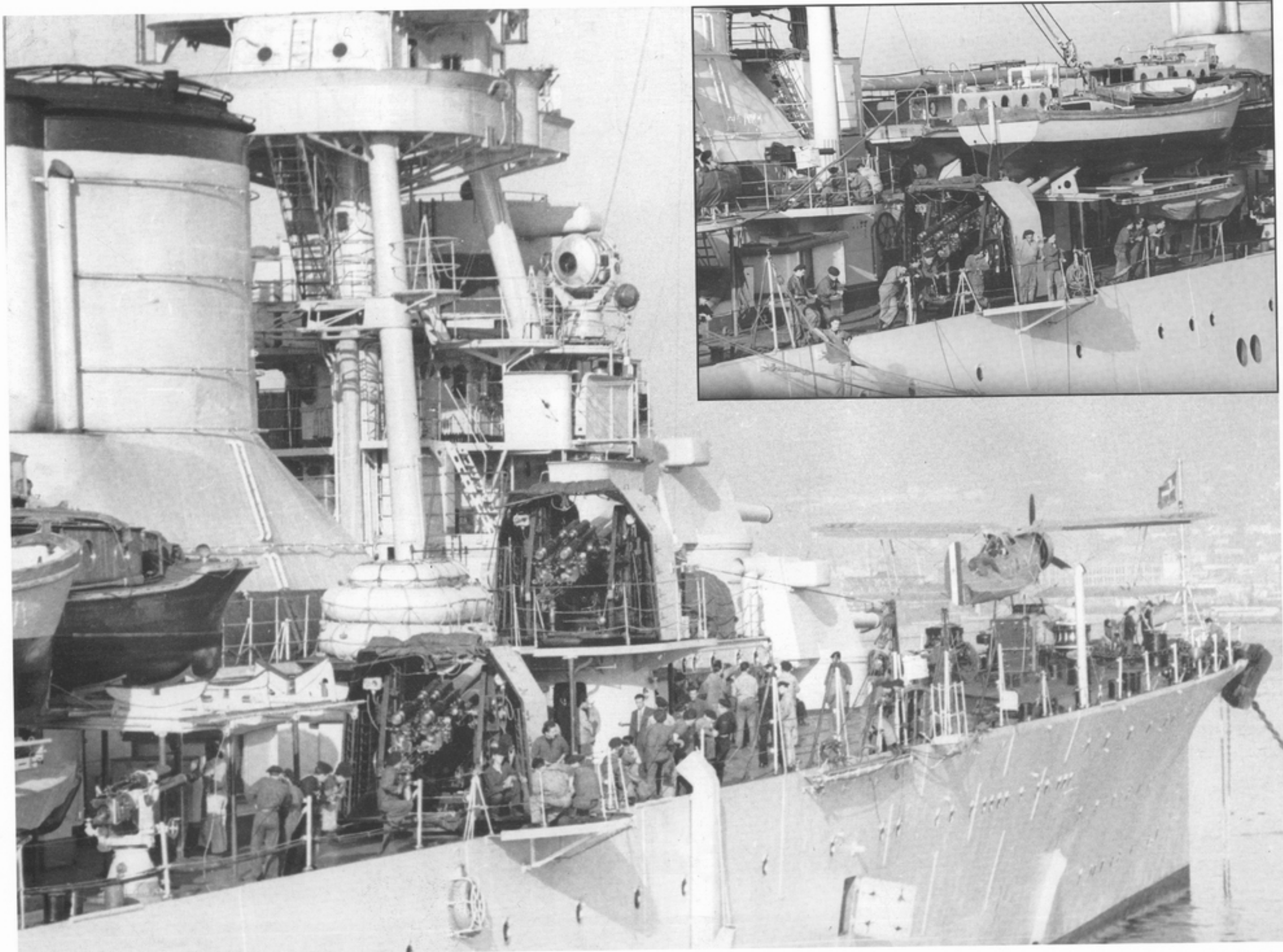




*Another view of Trieste soon after commissioning, taken in early 1929. The lower profile photograph was taken in late 1931, just after she had her forward tripod mast strengthened.*

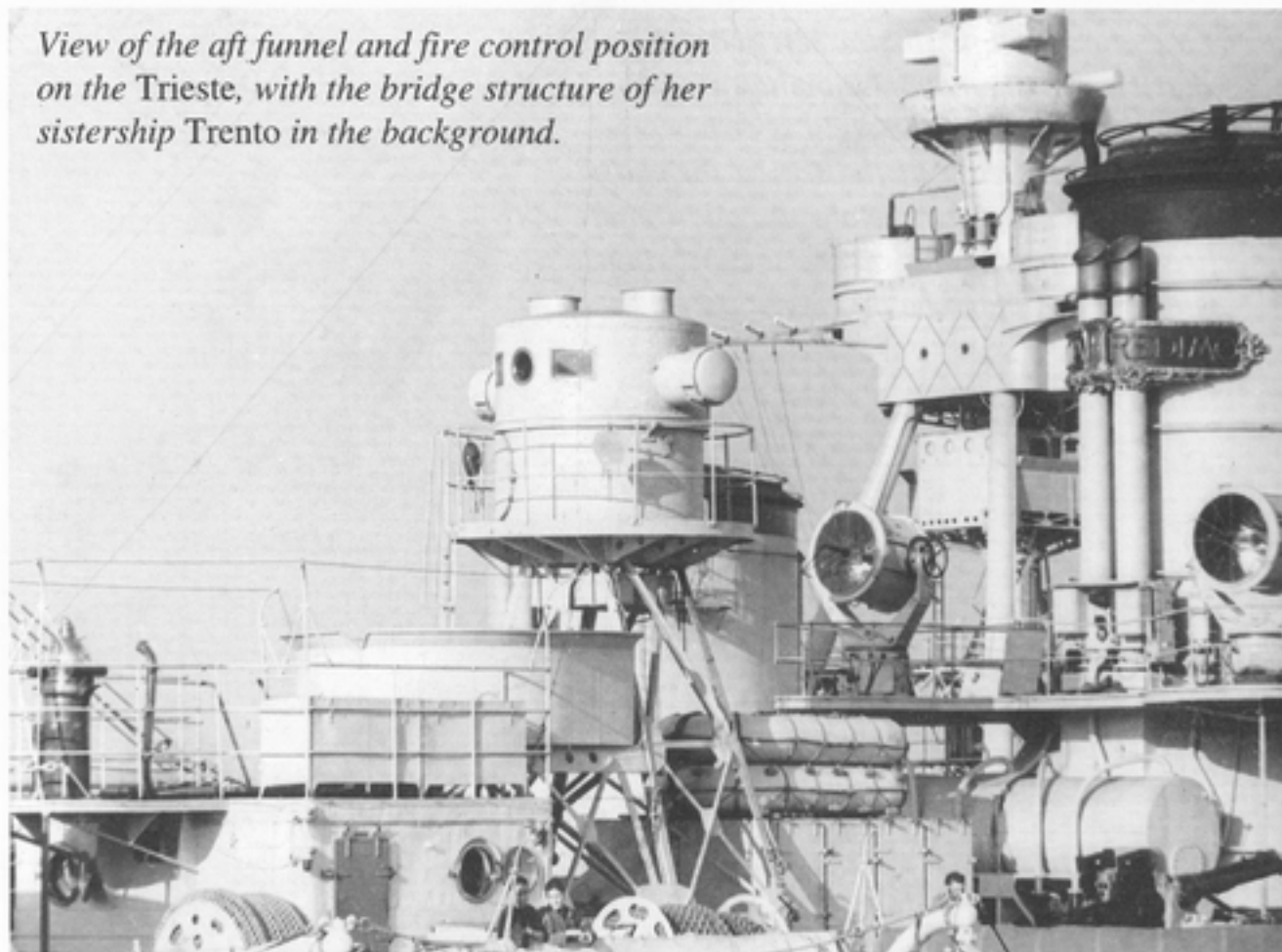






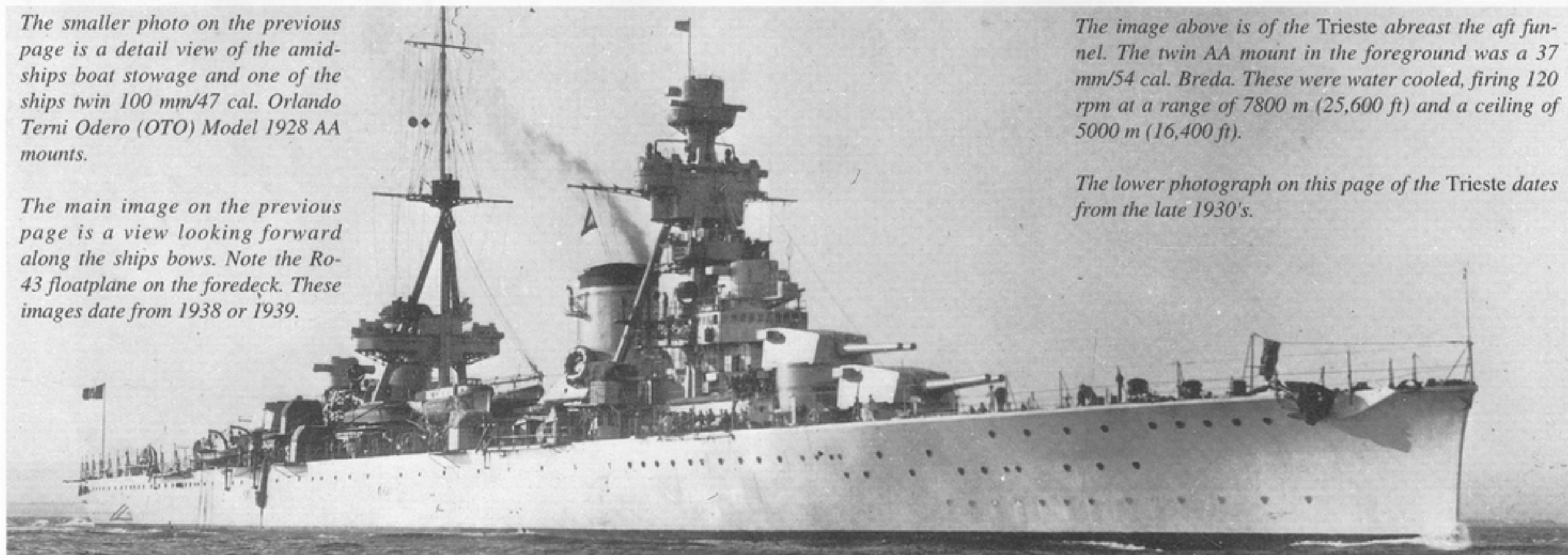


*View of the aft funnel and fire control position on the Trieste, with the bridge structure of her sistership Trento in the background.*



*The smaller photo on the previous page is a detail view of the amidships boat stowage and one of the ships twin 100 mm/47 cal. Orlando Terni Odero (OTO) Model 1928 AA mounts.*

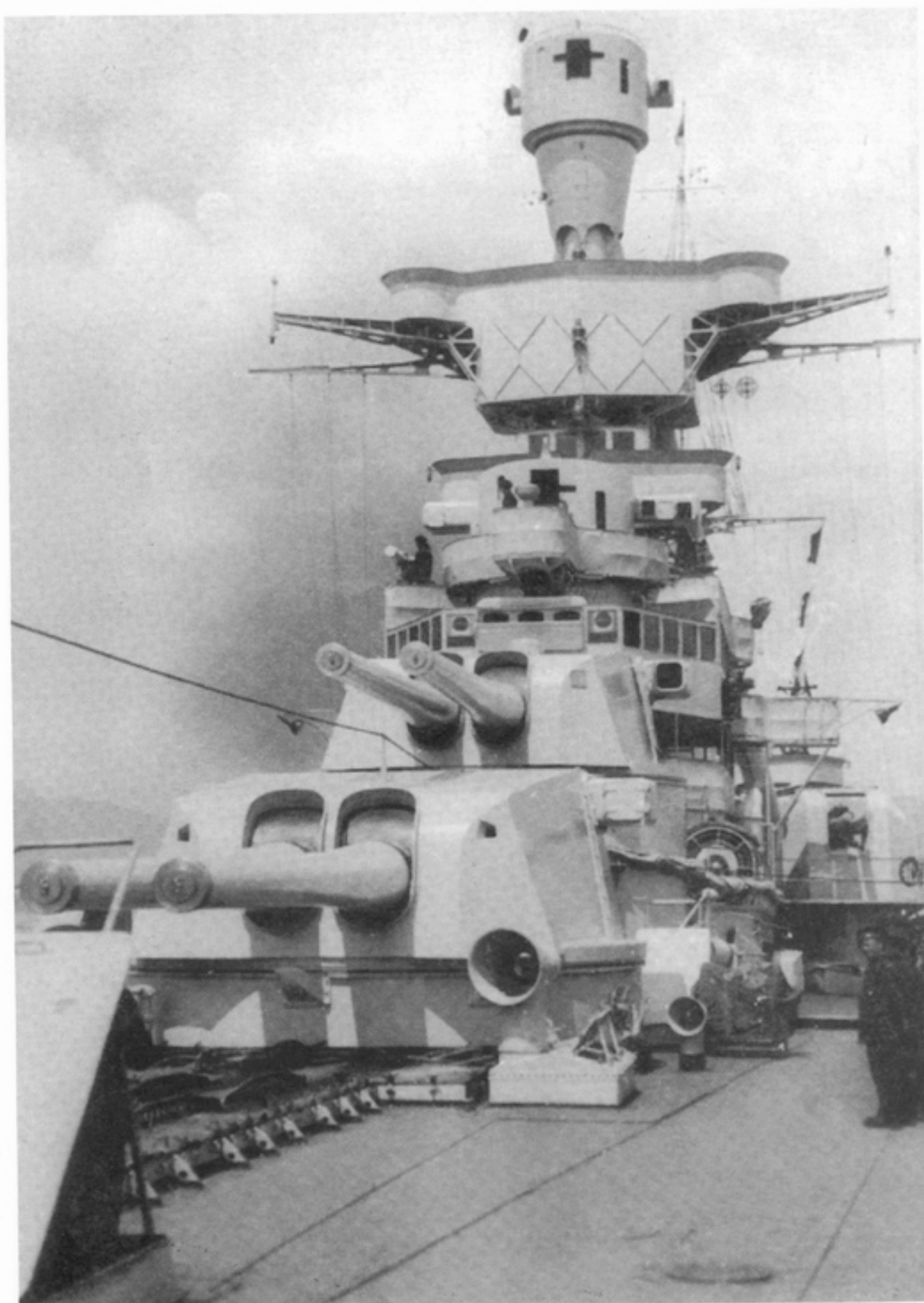
*The main image on the previous page is a view looking forward along the ships bows. Note the Ro-43 floatplane on the foredeck. These images date from 1938 or 1939.*



*The image above is of the Trieste abreast the aft funnel. The twin AA mount in the foreground was a 37 mm/54 cal. Breda. These were water cooled, firing 120 rpm at a range of 7800 m (25,600 ft) and a ceiling of 5000 m (16,400 ft).*

*The lower photograph on this page of the Trieste dates from the late 1930's.*





*The photograph to the left was taken shortly after the commissioning of Trieste, while the image to the right is of her after the reconstruction of the tripod foremast and bridge structure. Note the additional fire control directors on the upper bridge wings in the image on the right.*



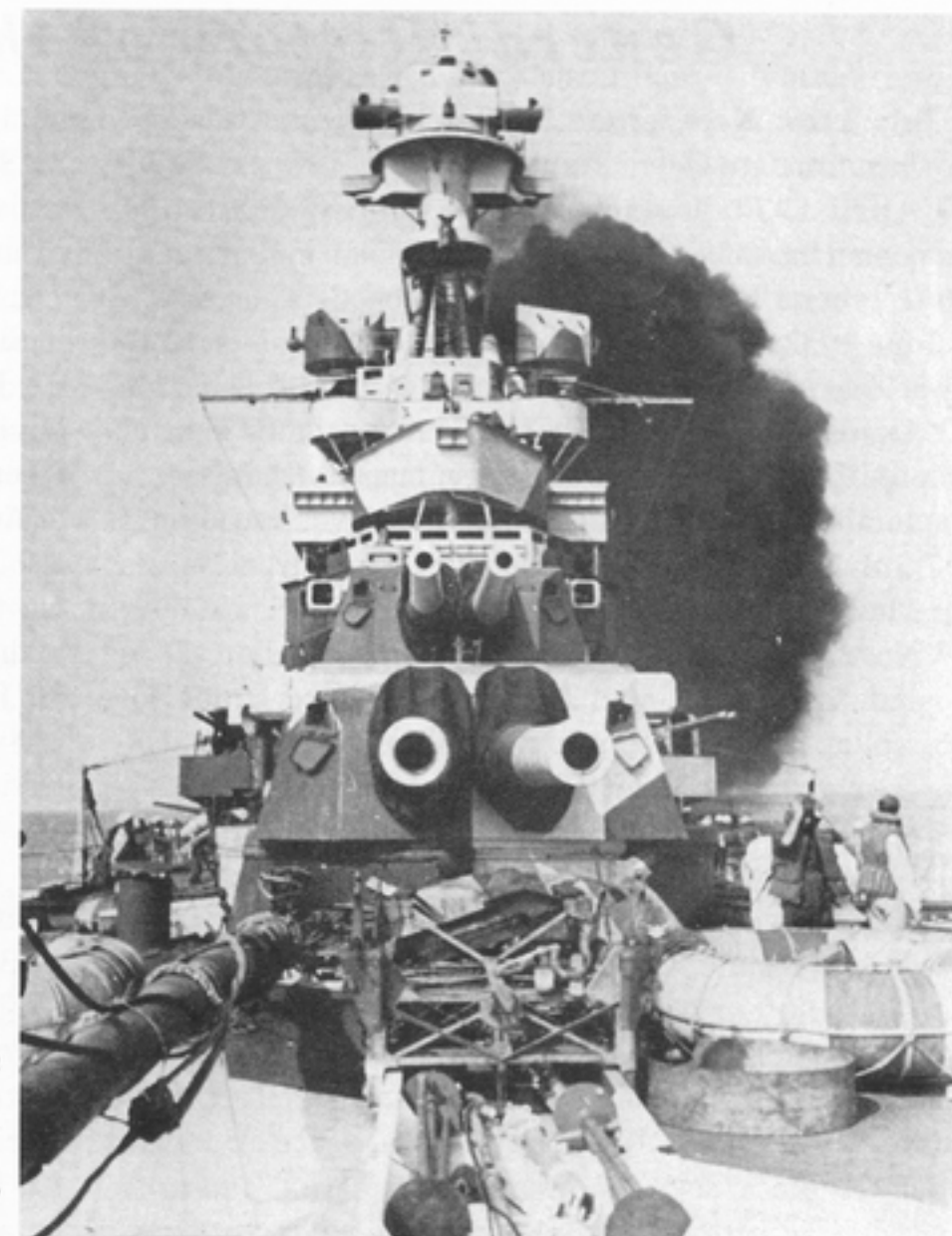




*The photograph above was taken on May 11, 1939, while Trieste was on maneuvers with her sistership Trento.*

*The image to the right of the forward turrets and bridge was taken about 1942. The bridge structure was again modified. Compare with the images on the previous page.*

*The lower photo was taken during 1942 when the dazzle camouflage pattern was applied to the warship. This was designed to confuse an observer, specifically British submarines, which were taking a toll on Italian warships.*





# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser *Zara*

**4 July 1929:** Keel for the heavy cruiser *Zara* was laid down at Cantiere Odero Terni Orlando in La Spezia.

**27 April 1930:** Launch of *Zara* coincided with the launch on the same day of sistership *Fiume*, in Trieste.

**20 October 1931:** *Zara* was commissioned.

**6 June 1932:** Presented with her battle flag in a ceremony at *Zara* (now Zadar, Croatia).

**13 August 1932:** During naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Naples, *Zara* hosted King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy.

**September 1932:** Flagship of the First Naval Squadron.

**6-7 July 1933:** *Zara* was on hand in the Gulf of Naples for Mussolini's naval review.

**27 November 1936:** As First Squadron flagship, *Zara* hosted King Emmanuel III, Crown Prince Umberto, Mussolini, and honoree Admiral Miklos von Horthy during a naval review in the Gulf of Naples.

**7 June 1937:** *Zara* presented honors to German Marshal Blomberg during a naval review in the Gulf of Naples.

**16 September 1937:** Flag of the First Squadron transferred to the battleship *Conti di Cavour*.

**5 May 1938:** *Zara* participated in Naval Review H in the Gulf of Naples honoring Adolf Hitler.

**7 March 1939:** *Zara* and First Division depart Taranto to intercept a Spanish Republican naval force trying to reach the Black Sea. The Republican cruisers *Miguel de Cervantes*, *Libertad*, *Mendez Nunez* and eight destroyers had left Nationalist held Cartagena with more than 600 refugees, for the Soviet Union. The Italian force was under orders to impede the Spanish warships' progress without firing on them, and attempted to direct them to port at Augusta, Sicily. The Spanish commander refused, and opts for French shelter at Bizerte, Tunisia, where the ships were interned.

**7-9 April 1939:** *Zara* took part in occupation of Albania.

**10 June 1939:** *Zara* was at Genoa for Navy Day.

**10 June 1940:** Italy entered the war. *Zara*, and sisterships *Fiume* and *Gorizia*, constitute the First Division of the First Squadron, based at Taranto.

**11-12 June 1940:** The First Division, patrolling in the vicinity of Crete, was the subject of an unsuccessful torpedo attack, and the destroyers in escort mounted a brisk

but inconclusive antisubmarine attack.

**21 June 1940:** Italian admiralty, wishing to array its cruisers for effective interception of convoys traveling from France to North Africa, relocated four divisions. The First Division departed Taranto, arriving at Augusta in Sicily the next morning.

**22 June 1940:** That afternoon after refueling, First Division joined Second and Third Divisions north of Palermo on an extended but fruitless patrol, and returned to Augusta two days later.

**8-9 July 1940:** The First Division, in line ahead following the Third Division, trades fire with British warships in the Battle of Punta Stilo.

**30 July-1 August 1940:** *Zara* on convoy escort duty to Libyan ports Benghazi and Tripoli with the First Division plus the heavy cruisers *Trento* and *Pola*.

**16 August 1940:** *Zara* and the First Division navigate off Naples, practicing targeting skills against the La Motte rock formation.

**29-30 August 1940:** The First Division departed Naples for Taranto.

**31 August-2 September 1940:** *Zara* joined the abortive sortie intended to interfere with the British Navy's Operation Hats.

**11-12 November 1940:** The Italian fleet, lying at Taranto, was attacked at night by British carrier aircraft. *Zara*, moored in Taranto's Mar Grande during the raid with sisters *Fiume* and *Gorizia*, was unharmed.

**12 November-9 December 1940:** First Division departed Taranto for safer harbors. *Zara* proceeded to La Spezia for yard work.

**10 December 1940:** *Zara* returned to Naples.

**15 December 1940:** Following the Allied bombing of Naples the previous day, *Zara* and *Gorizia* were transferred temporarily to La Maddalena, in Sardinia.

**19-22 December 1940:** *Zara* and *Gorizia* returned to Naples briefly, then proceeded to Taranto.

**29 January 1941:** *Zara* and *Gorizia* on maneuvers in the Gulf of Taranto.

**13 February 1941:** The newly returned *Pola* joined *Zara* and *Gorizia* for exercises in the Gulf of Taranto.

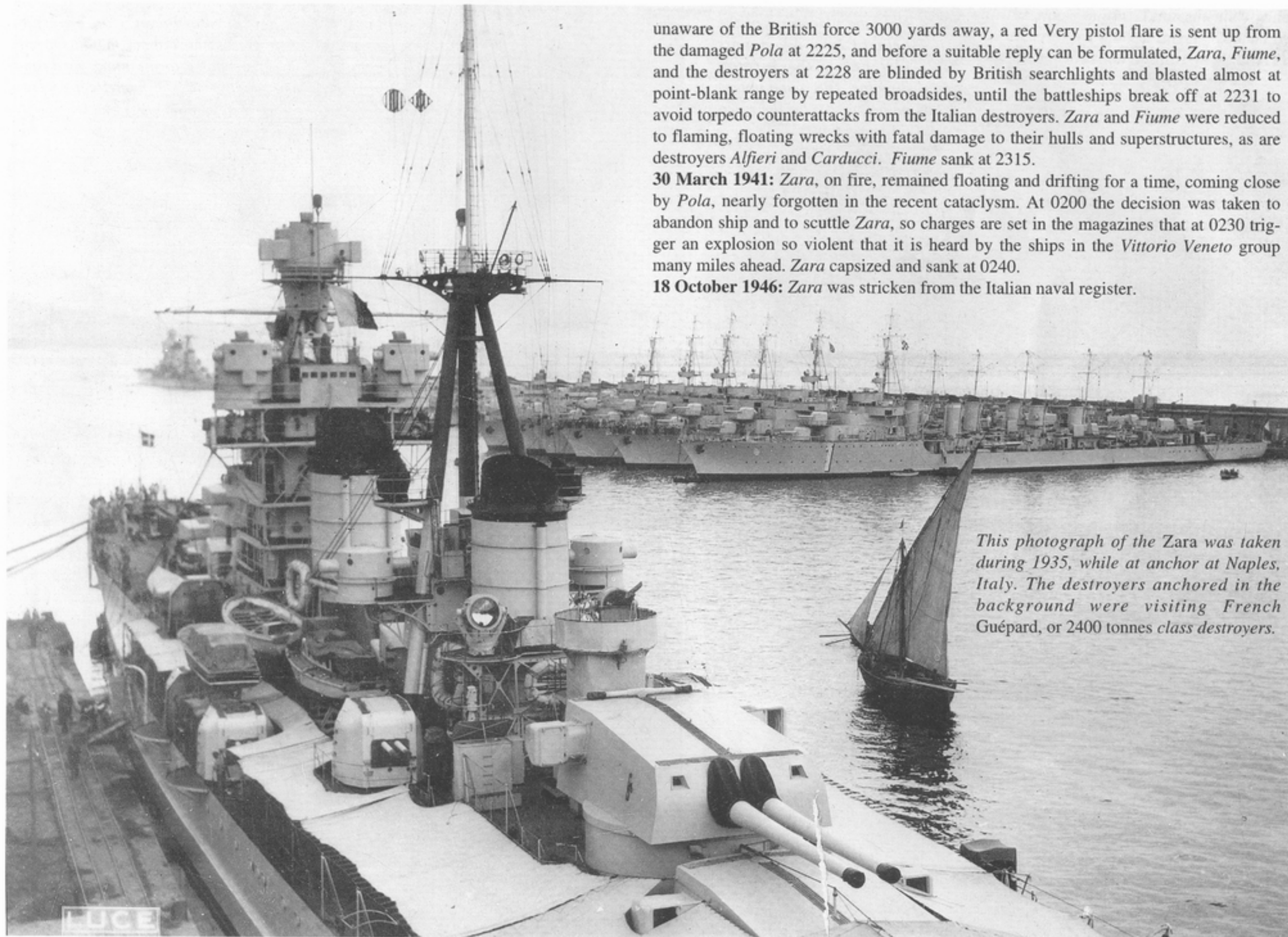
**11-17 March 1941:** *Zara*, *Pola* and *Fiume* maneuver and conduct firing exercises in the Gulf of Taranto.

**26-27 March 1941:** First Division, now *Zara*, *Fiume* and *Pola*, and four destroyers, departed Taranto in the evening for a rendezvous early the next day east of Augusta with squadron flagship *Vittorio Veneto*, Third Division, and Eighth Division. Operation Gaudo was underway towards Crete.

**28 March 1941:** After joining the Eighth Division in a breakaway drive further into the Aegean late the previous evening, the First and Eighth rejoin the main battle group on the morning, when the Third Division and *Vittorio Veneto* encounter British cruisers.

**29 March 1941:** In late afternoon *Vittorio Veneto* was torpedoed, after which the Third, First Divisions and escorting destroyers cluster around her and head for Taranto. *Zara* led the First Division line on the flagship's starboard beam, followed by *Pola* and *Fiume*, as the group gradually increases speed from 15 knots to 19 knots. Throughout the afternoon and into hazy, moonless darkness the battle group is dogged by enemy air attacks, the last of which succeeds in torpedoing and stopping *Pola* at 1950. *Pola's* situation was unknown to the main group until 2015, and at 2106, *Zara* and *Fiume* are ordered to turn back with four destroyers, *Alfieri*, *Gioberti*, *Carducci*, and *Oriani*, to aid *Pola*. At the same time, unknown to the Italians, the British Mediterranean Fleet Battle Squadron, battleships *Warspite*, *Valiant*, and *Barham*, were closing quickly on *Pola*, alerted by radar of an advance unit which mistakenly concludes that she is *Vittorio Veneto*, damaged by that afternoon's air attack. The six Italian ships steaming toward *Pola* did so only at between 16 and 22 knots in an attempt to conserve the precious fuel supplies that will be taxed by this double-back, and consequently do not close in on *Pola* until 2220. They are also steaming in an unorthodox line-ahead formation with the cruisers preceding the destroyers, especially odd since *Zara's* main armament was not prepared to undertake night engagements, evidence that the Italians expected nothing other than a rescue operation from this sortie. As they approached *Pola*, still





unaware of the British force 3000 yards away, a red Very pistol flare is sent up from the damaged *Pola* at 2225, and before a suitable reply can be formulated, *Zara*, *Fiume*, and the destroyers at 2228 are blinded by British searchlights and blasted almost at point-blank range by repeated broadsides, until the battleships break off at 2231 to avoid torpedo counterattacks from the Italian destroyers. *Zara* and *Fiume* were reduced to flaming, floating wrecks with fatal damage to their hulls and superstructures, as are destroyers *Alfieri* and *Carducci*. *Fiume* sank at 2315.

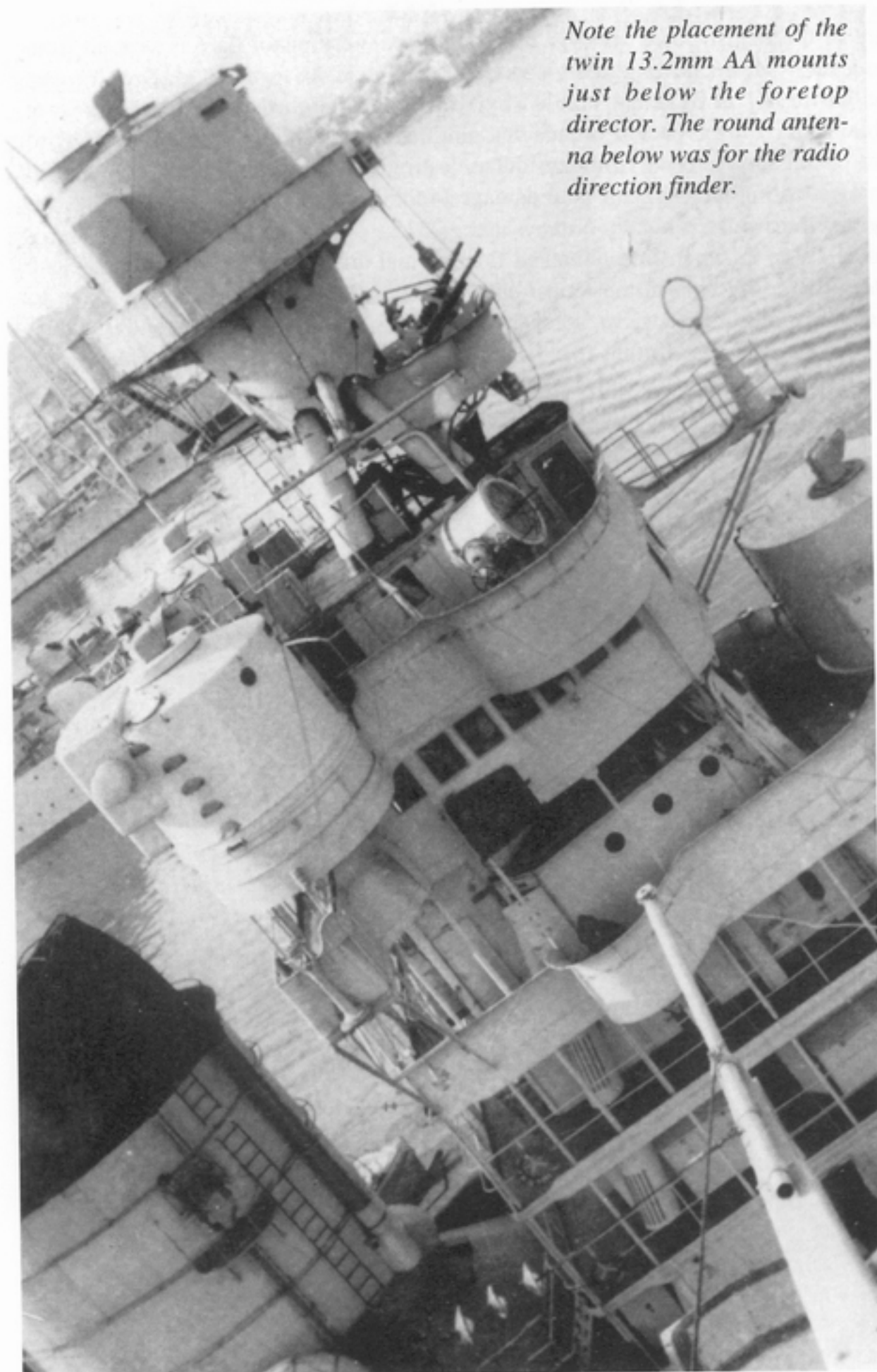
**30 March 1941:** *Zara*, on fire, remained floating and drifting for a time, coming close by *Pola*, nearly forgotten in the recent cataclysm. At 0200 the decision was taken to abandon ship and to scuttle *Zara*, so charges are set in the magazines that at 0230 trigger an explosion so violent that it is heard by the ships in the *Vittorio Veneto* group many miles ahead. *Zara* capsized and sank at 0240.

**18 October 1946:** *Zara* was stricken from the Italian naval register.

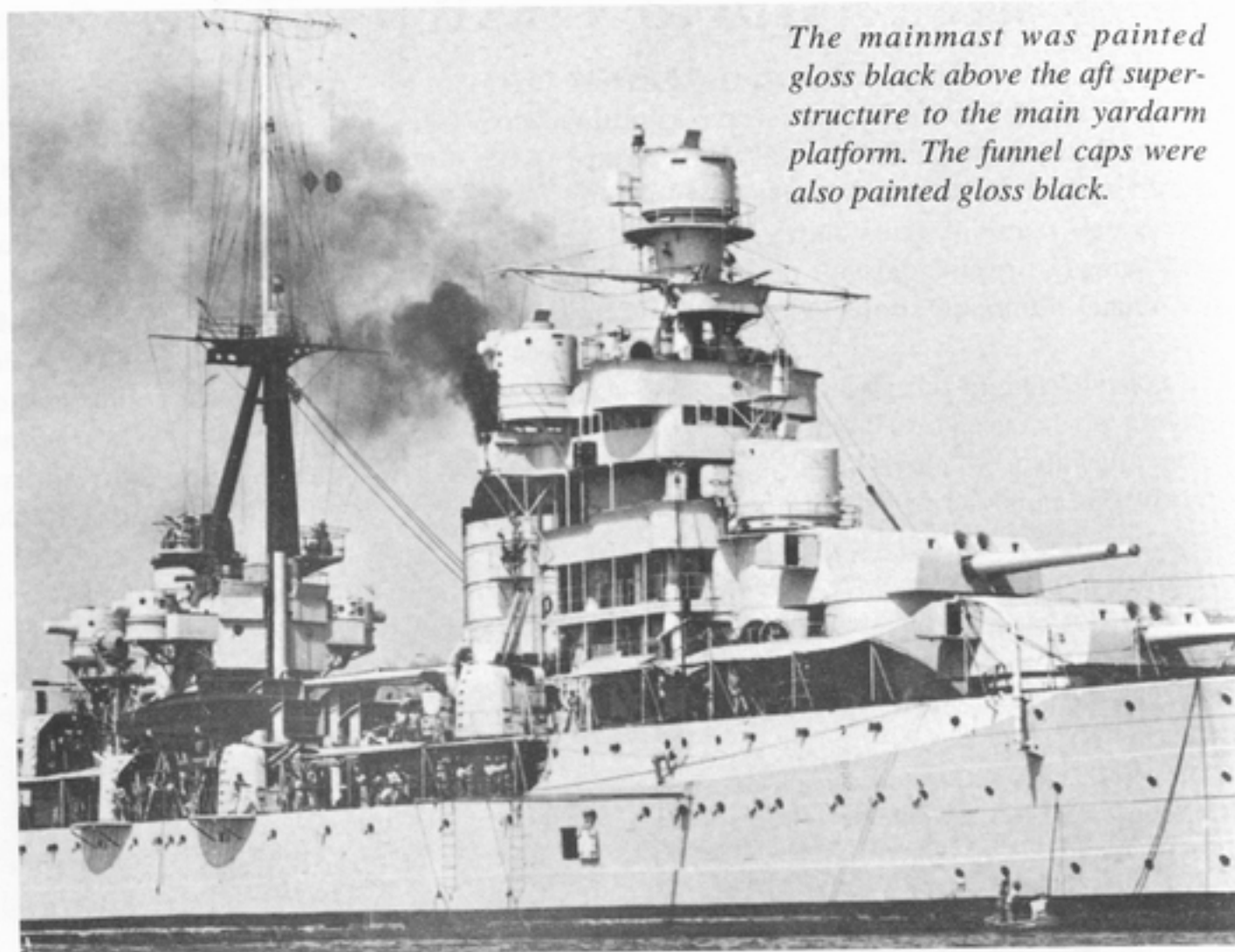
*This photograph of the Zara was taken during 1935, while at anchor at Naples, Italy. The destroyers anchored in the background were visiting French Guépard, or 2400 tonnes class destroyers.*



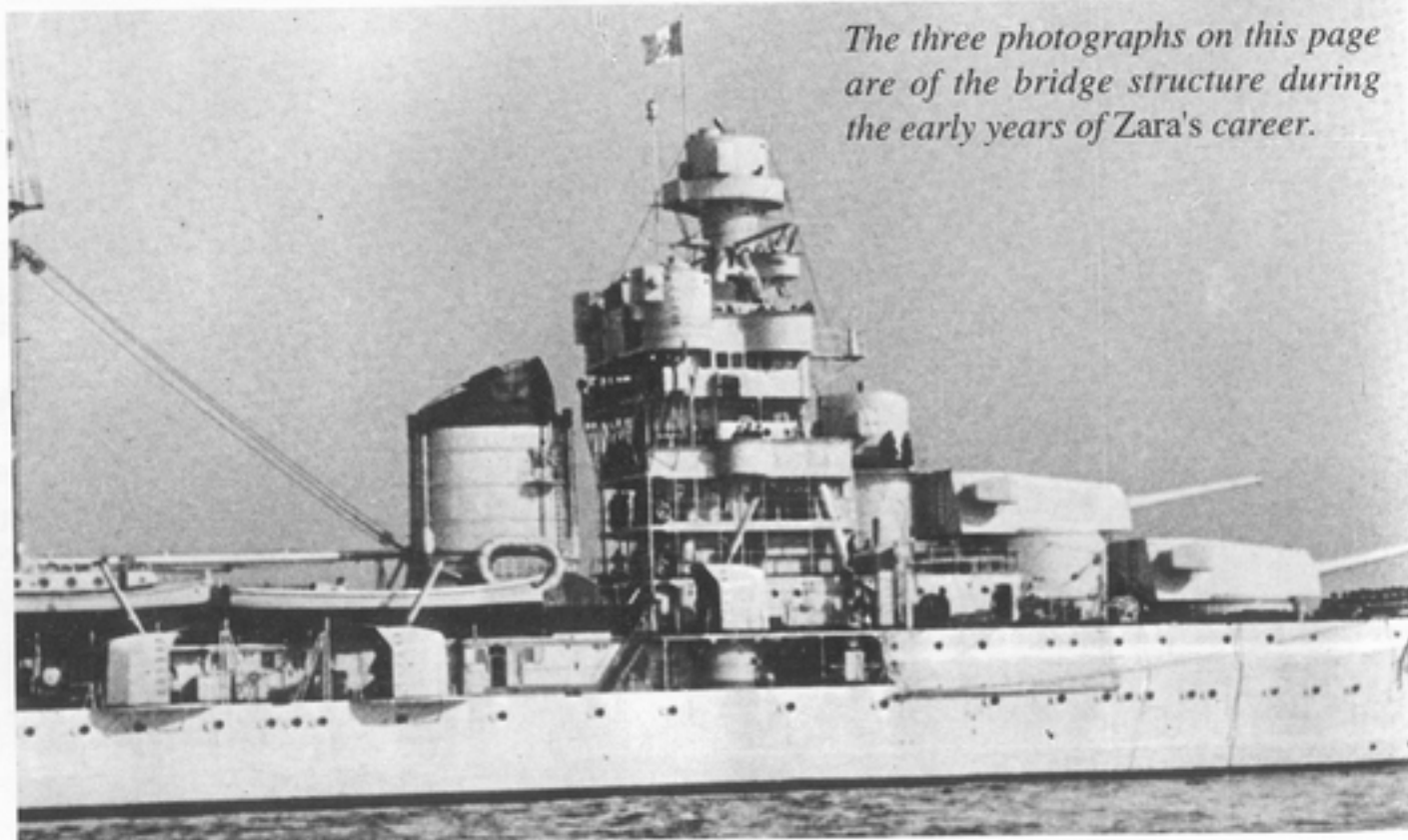
*Note the placement of the twin 13.2mm AA mounts just below the foretop director. The round antenna below was for the radio direction finder.*



*The mainmast was painted gloss black above the aft superstructure to the main yardarm platform. The funnel caps were also painted gloss black.*



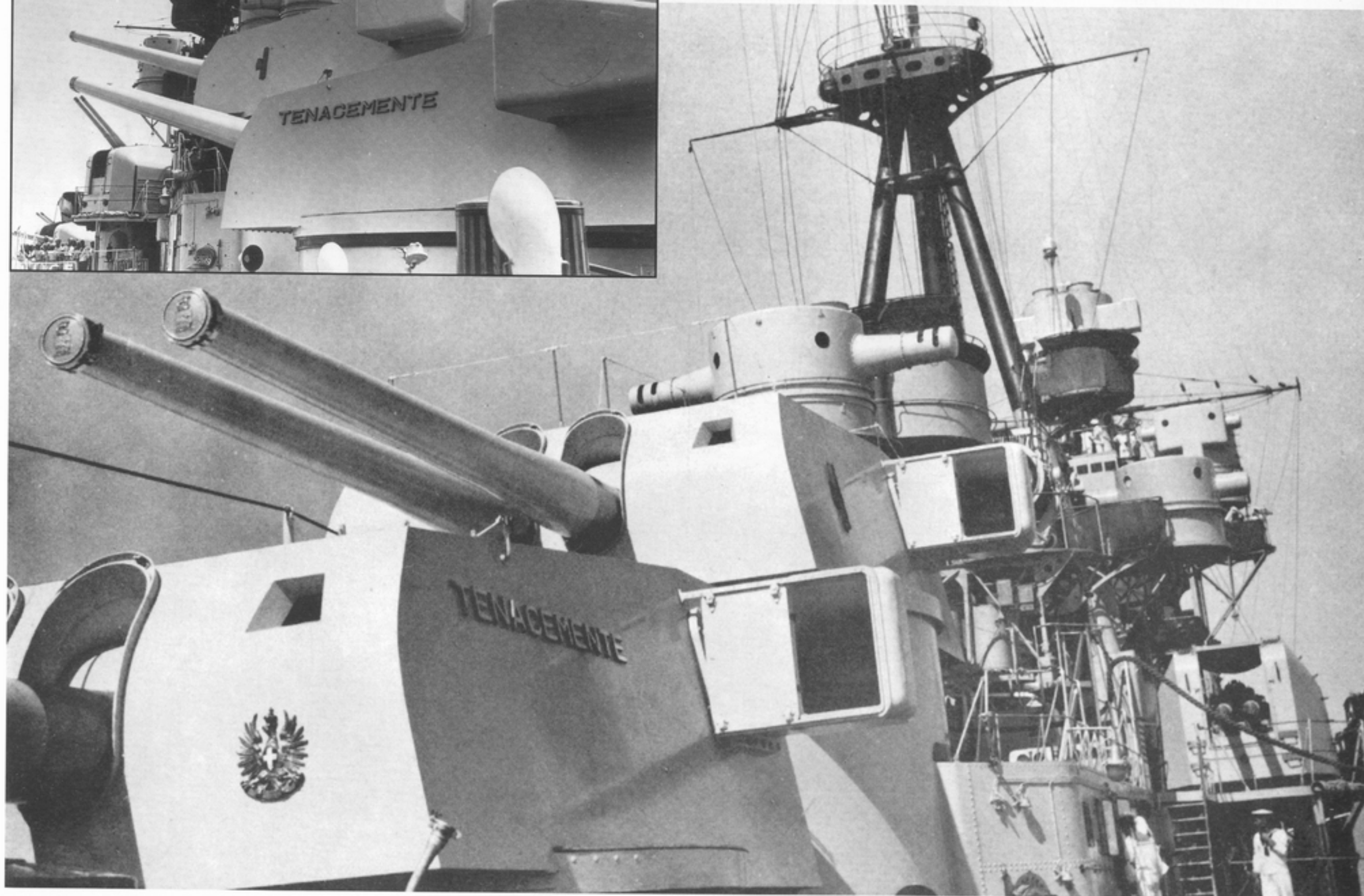
*The three photographs on this page are of the bridge structure during the early years of Zara's career.*





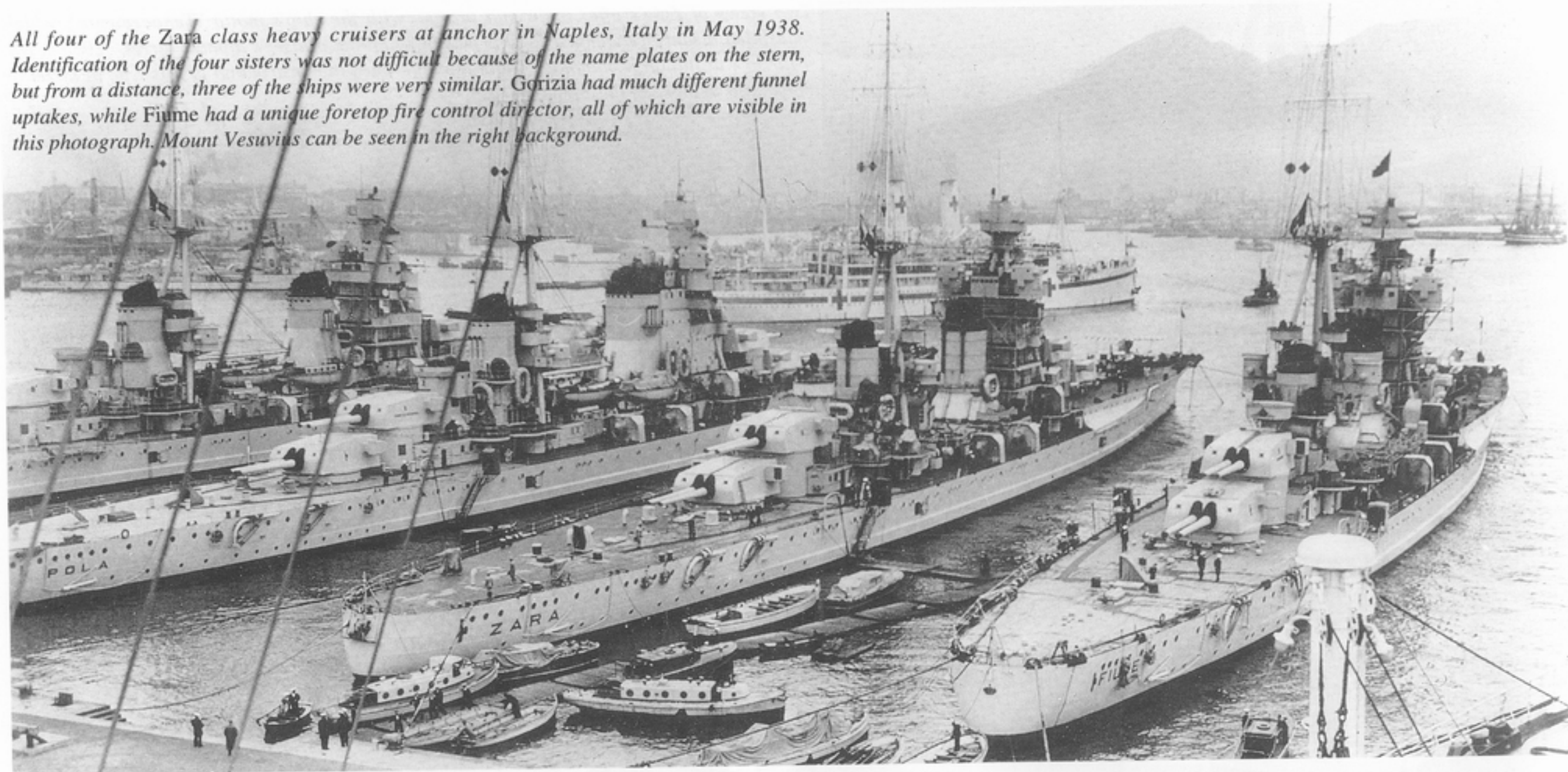


Two views of Zara's after main gun turrets, with the ship's motto "Tenacemente", which translated meant "Tenaciously". This was hung on the cruiser's aftmost turret, "203mm No. 4 turret", in Italian terminology. Note the difference in construction of this type of turret as compared to those of the Trento class.





*All four of the Zara class heavy cruisers at anchor in Naples, Italy in May 1938. Identification of the four sisters was not difficult because of the name plates on the stern, but from a distance, three of the ships were very similar. Gorizia had much different funnel uptakes, while Fiume had a unique foretop fire control director, all of which are visible in this photograph. Mount Vesuvius can be seen in the right background.*

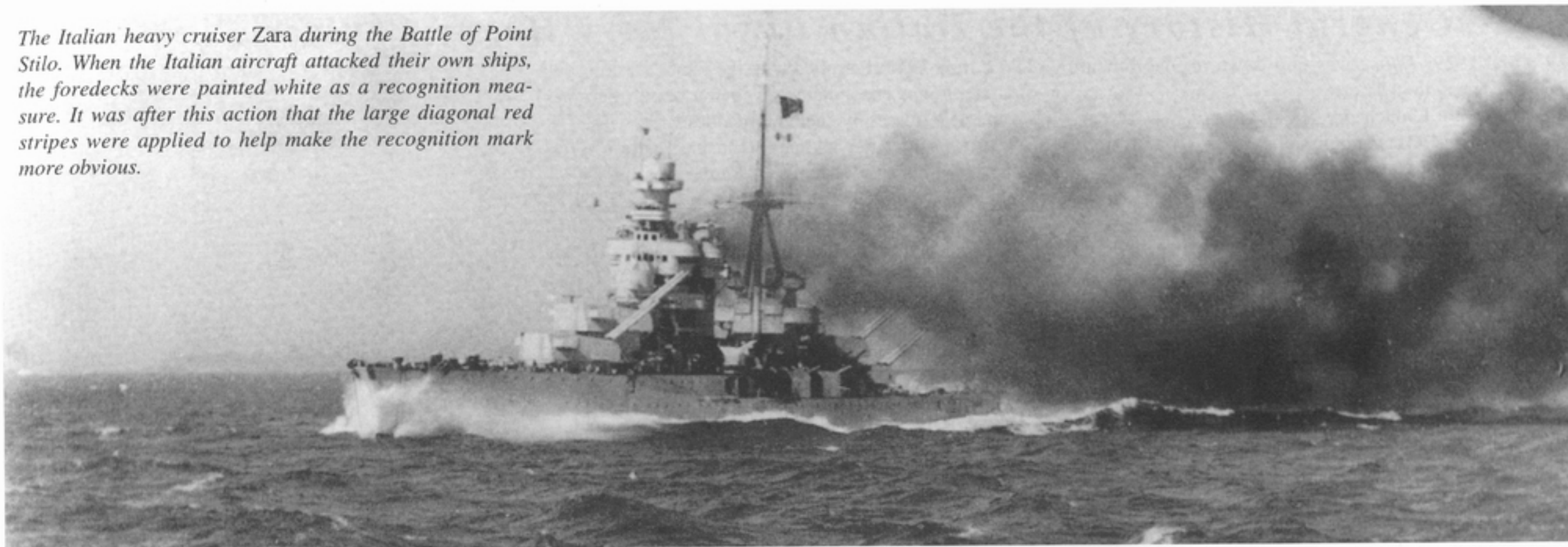


*All four warships of the Zara class were present in this photograph taken during the Battle of Point Stilo, July 9, 1940. This was known by the British as the Action off Calabria. Also present were the heavy cruisers Trento and Bolzano. This turned out to be a minor skirmish, but the Italian cruisers were mistakenly attacked by Italian aircraft at one point during the action.*



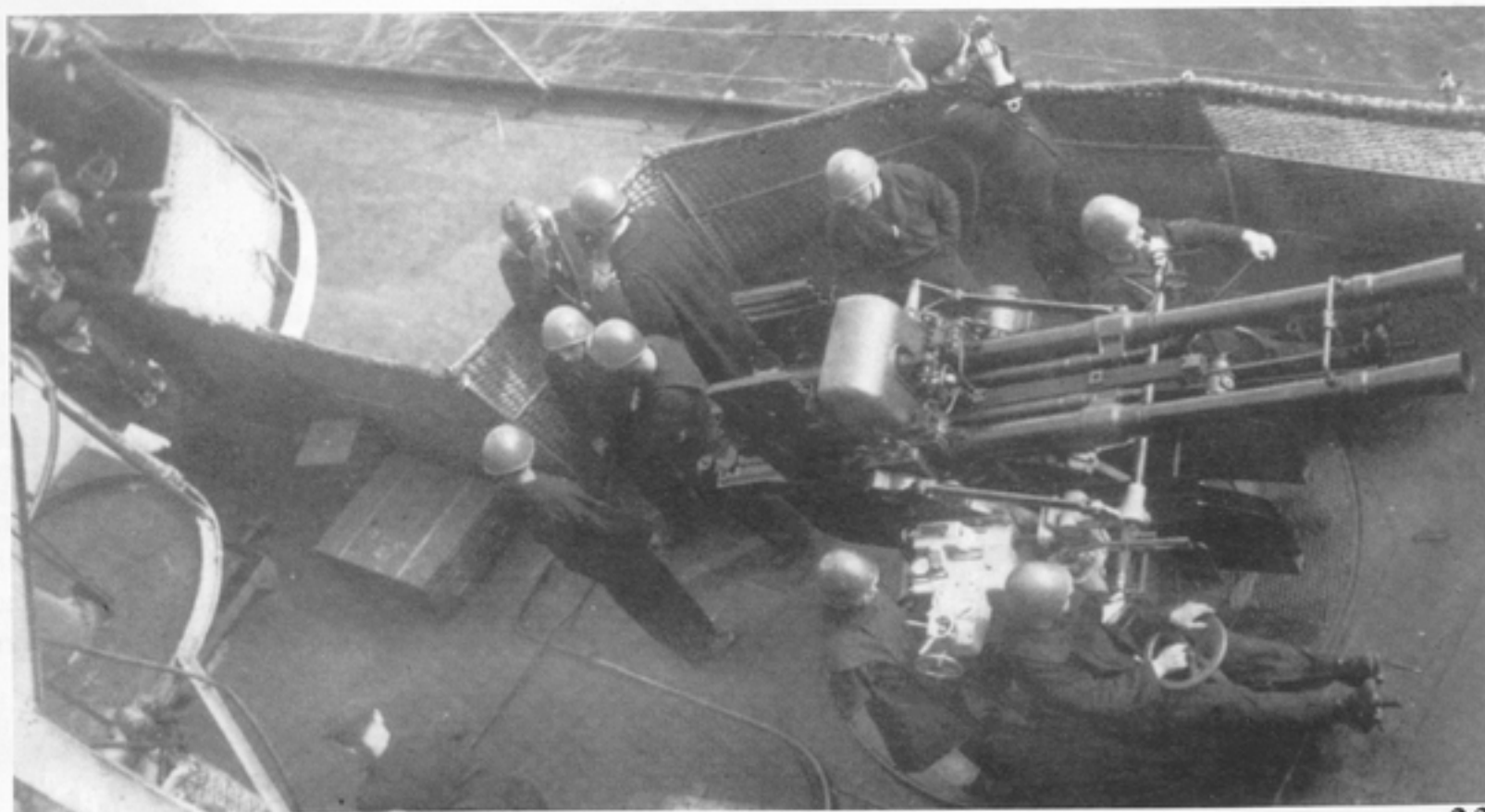


*The Italian heavy cruiser Zara during the Battle of Point Stilo. When the Italian aircraft attacked their own ships, the foredecks were painted white as a recognition measure. It was after this action that the large diagonal red stripes were applied to help make the recognition mark more obvious.*



*The image to the left is of one of the twin 100mm AA mounts aboard a Zara class cruiser.*

*The image below is of the modified aft platform with the twin 37mm AA mounts aboard a Zara class cruiser.*





# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser *Fiume*

**29 April 1929:** *Fiume* was laid down at Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino in Trieste.

**27 April 1930:** Launched.

**23 November 1931:** Commissioned.

**13 August 1932:** Naval maneuvers off Naples.

**6-7 July 1933:** Participated in a naval review for Mussolini in the Gulf of Naples.

**16 March 1934:** Ceremony for her battle flag at Fiume (now Rijeka, Croatia) was nearly rained out.

**4-6 January 1935:** *Fiume* was rigged with a temporary flight deck aft to test landings and launches by an experimental autogiro as she steamed off La Spezia.

**24 July 1936:** *Fiume* and light cruiser *Attendolo* were dispatched to Barcelona and Malaga to help evacuate Italian nationals and other civilians, and to protect Italian interests in the early unrest of the Spanish Civil War.

**1 August 1936:** *Attendolo* arrived at La Spezia, while *Fiume* remained anchored off Barcelona as part of an ad hoc international repatriation and observation flotilla that also included British cruiser *HMS Galatea*, French cruiser *Duquesne*, American cruiser *USS Quincy*, and the German battleship *Deutschland*.

**15 August 1936:** *Fiume* returned to Italy.

**19-31 August 1936:** *Fiume* again dispatched to Spain, anchored in the harbor of Palma de Mallorca.

**27 November 1936:** *Fiume* was on hand in the Gulf of Naples to honor Hungarian regent Admiral Horthy with a naval review.

**17 May 1937:** Flag duties of the First Division were passed to *Fiume* from *Gorizia*.

**7 June 1937:** *Fiume* paraded before German Marshal Blomberg in a Gulf of Naples naval review.

**5 May 1938:** *Fiume* took part in Naval Review H, for Adolf Hitler in the Gulf of Naples.

**7 March 1939:** *Fiume* and the First Division sortie from Taranto with orders to intercept a Spanish Republican naval force.

**7-9 April 1939:** *Fiume* took part in the landings and conquest of Albania.

**10 June 1940:** As Italy entered the war, *Fiume* joined *Zara* and *Gorizia* in the First Division, First Squadron.

**11-12 June 1940:** Patrolled with the First Division south of Crete, *Fiume* encountered no enemy vessels but noted several near misses by enemy torpedoes.

**8-9 July 1940:** After taking part in the Battle of Punta Stilo and emerging unscathed, *Fiume* was mistakenly straddled by two 250kg bombs from an Italian warplane.

**30 July 1940-1 August 1940:** *Fiume* joined *Zara*, *Gorizia* and other Italian Navy vessels in escorting convoys to Benghazi and Tripoli.

**16 August 1940:** *Fiume* and First Division exercised off Naples, firing on the La Motte rock formation.

**29-30 August 1940:** The First Division departed Naples for Taranto.

**31 August-2 September 1940:** *Fiume* took part in the abortive attempt to head off Operation Hats.

**11-12 November 1940:** *Fiume* was at Taranto during the British air attack, in Mar Grande with the First Division. Receiving no damage, she and her sister ships *Pola* and *Gorizia* make for Naples the next day.

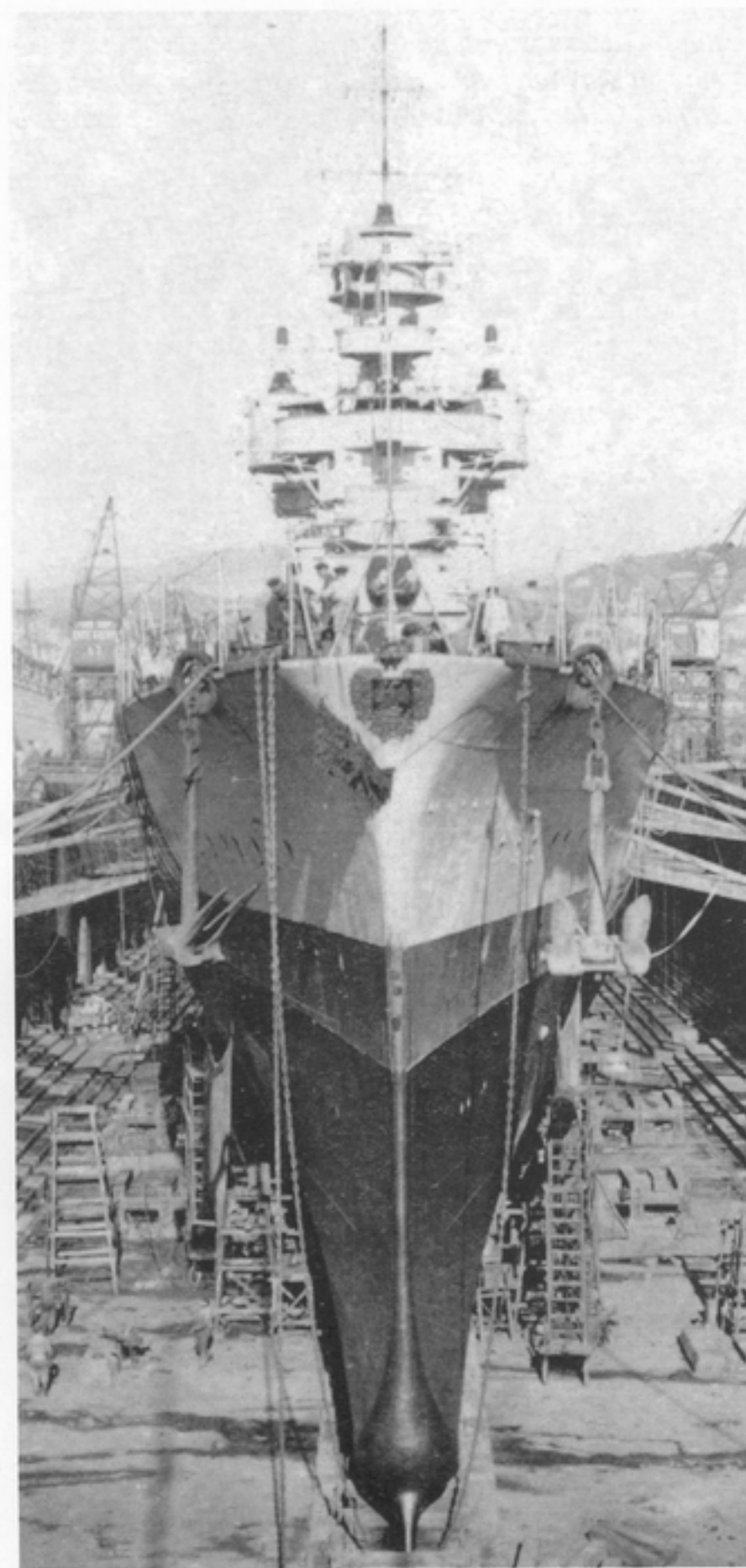
**26-28 November 1940:** *Fiume* took part in the inconclusive Battle of Cape Teulada.

**12 November 1940-28 February 1941:** *Fiume* entered the yard at La Spezia for a refit. When she emerged in late February, she was newly painted in an experimental camouflage scheme.

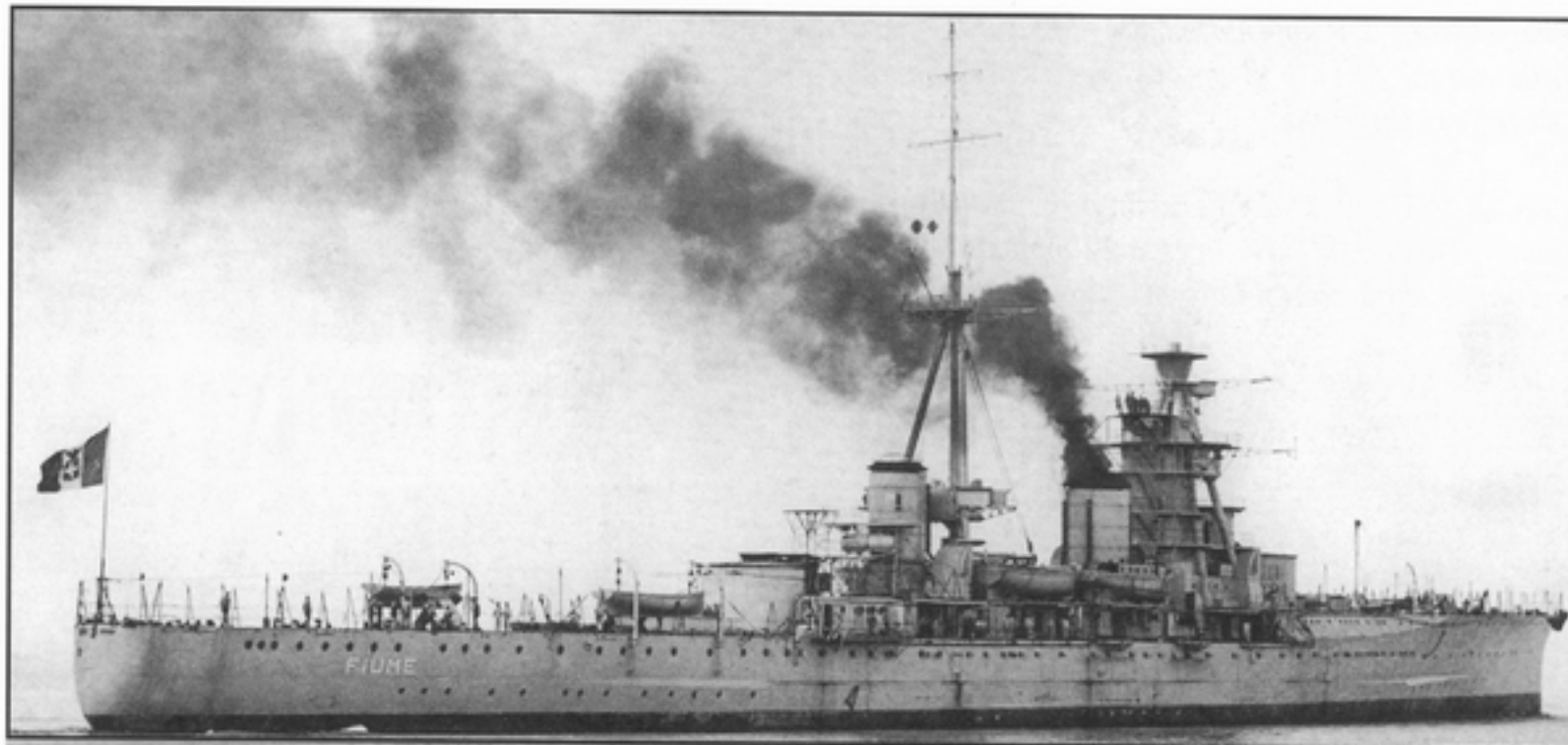
**26-27 March 1941:** *Fiume* and the Third Division depart Taranto in the evening to join up with elements of Operation Gaudio.

**28 March 1941:** When *Pola* was torpedoed at dusk, she slowed down so rapidly in line that *Fiume* took evasive action to avoid a collision. At 2157, while steaming in column to rescue *Pola*, crews aboard *Fiume* make ready to take *Pola* in tow, and are still readying cables as the formation nears the damaged ship. At 2228 *Fiume* was the first ship illuminated and fired upon by British warships. Projectiles from *Warspite* and *Valiant* pummel *Fiume's* main deck and after turrets, and spectacular fires consume the shattered ship, which sinks stern first, to starboard at 2315.

**18 October 1946:** *Fiume* was stricken from the Italian naval register.



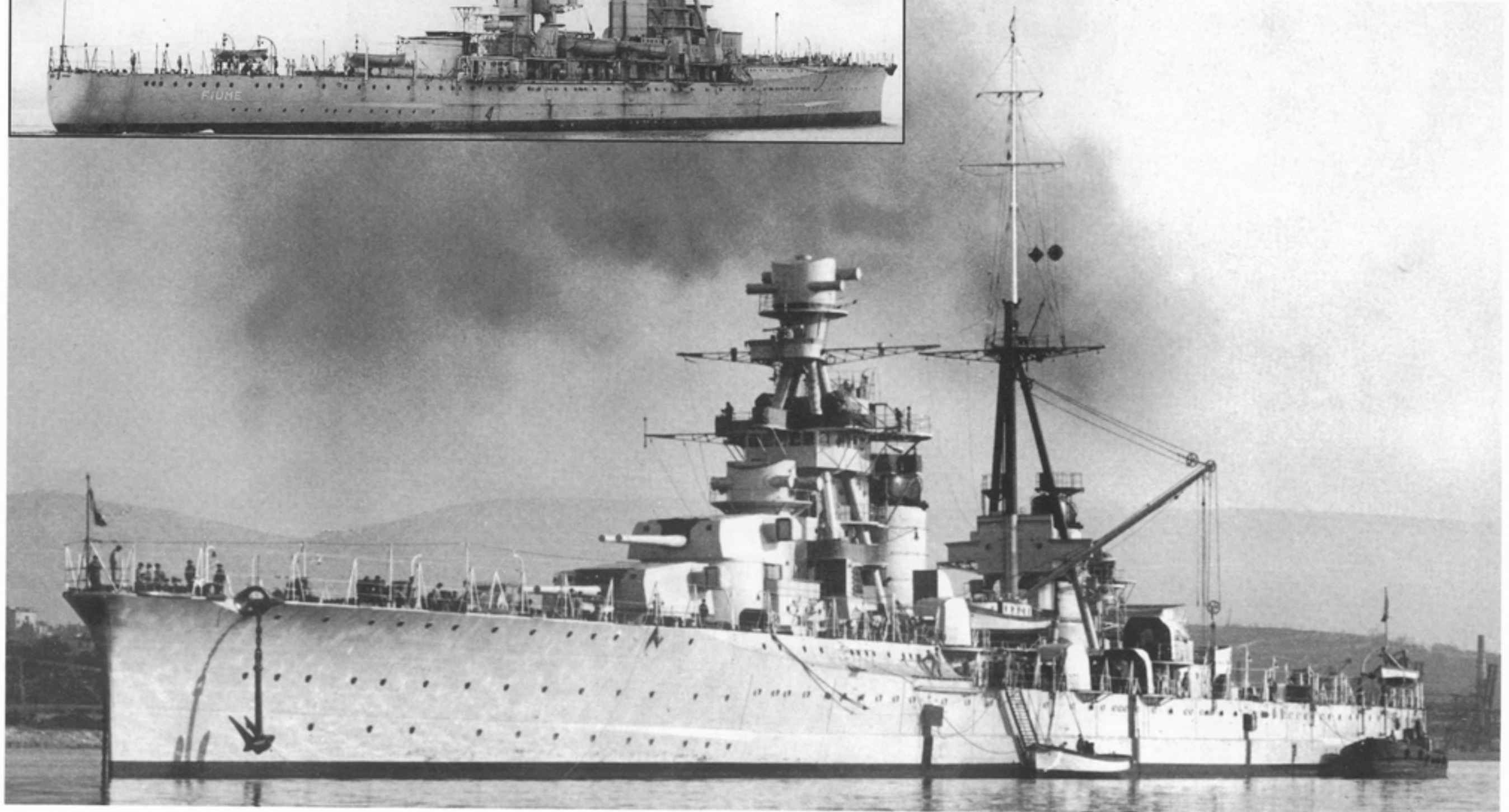




*The image on the previous page is of the Fiume in drydock during the late 1930s.*

*The photograph to the left was taken during her machinery trials, minus her armament and fire control directors.*

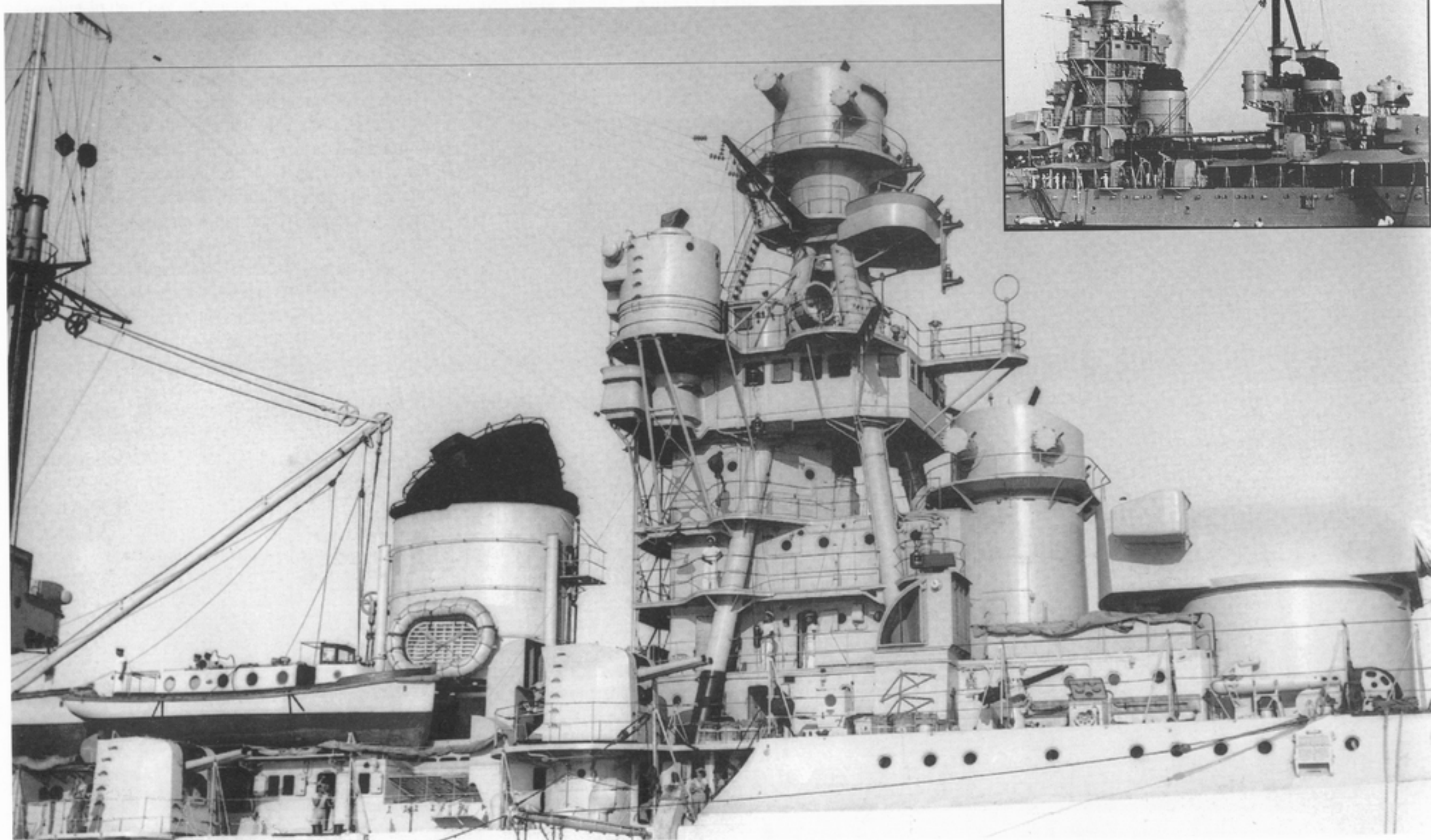
*Below is one more image of Fiume prior to commissioning, still in the fitting out stage. At the time of construction and throughout their careers, the vessels of the Zara class had only the aft deck covered with wood. This was left unpainted, in its natural state. All other decks were steel painted dark gray.*



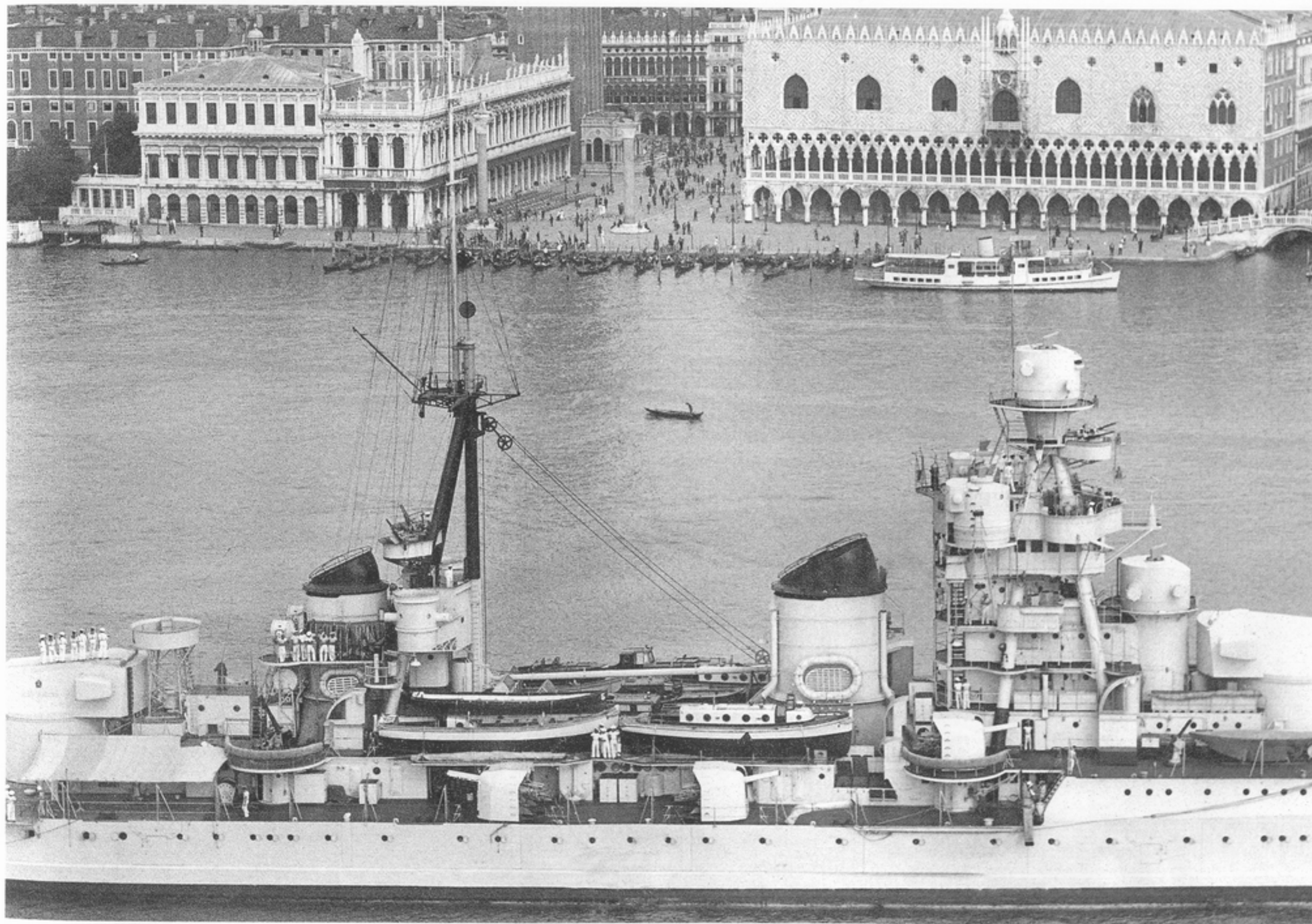


Both of the photographs on this page were taken of the Fiume early in her career. The one outstanding feature of Fiume that made her identifiable from the other ships in the Zara class was the fore and the foretop director. There were also other minor bridge structure differences from her sisterships, but the directors were very different.

The image on the opposite page was taken in the harbor at Venice, Italy, about 1937-39. One interesting item in this photograph is the large single AA mount on the aft platform abreast the after funnel. This could have been a 120mm starshell gun used to aid in Fiume's night fighting capabilities. Also in this photo is possibly the captain's sailboat, stowed for transport on the foredeck abreast the 203mm No. 2 turret.







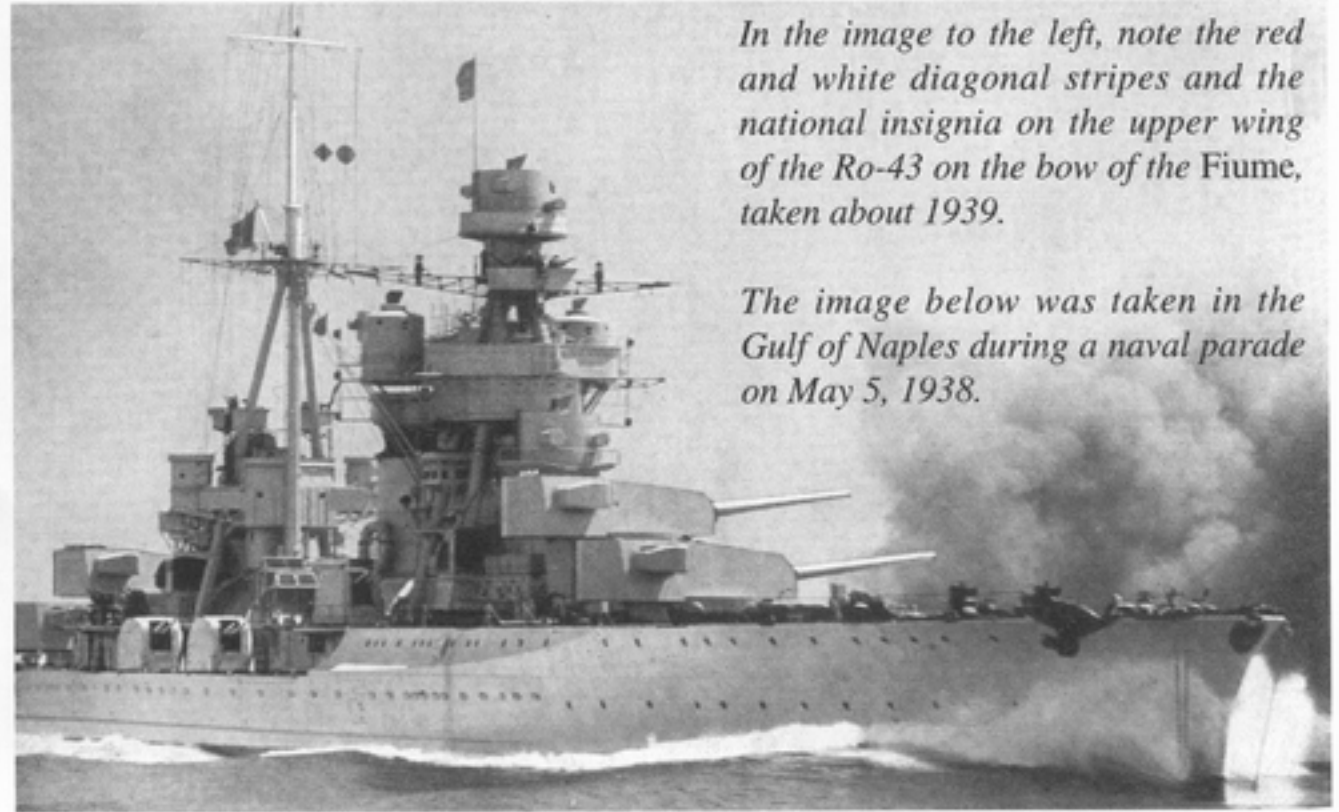


*A full size image of the Fiume at Venice, Italy, about 1937-39. Note the dark gray painted steel decks on the ship at that time.*

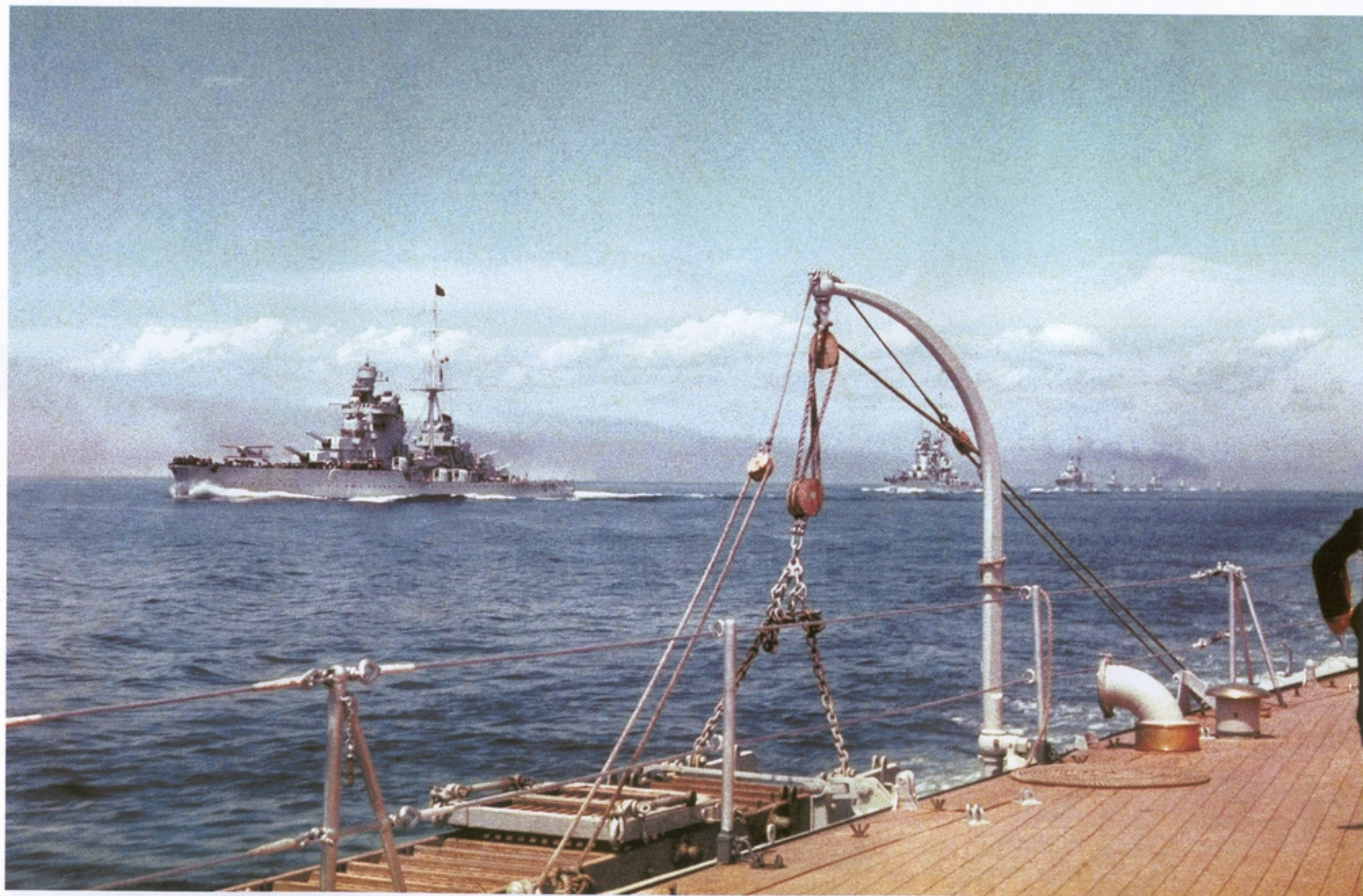


*In the image to the left, note the red and white diagonal stripes and the national insignia on the upper wing of the Ro-43 on the bow of the Fiume, taken about 1939.*

*The image below was taken in the Gulf of Naples during a naval parade on May 5, 1938.*







*The heavy cruiser Pola leading a line of other heavy and light cruisers during the naval parade presented by dictator Benito Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel of Italy for Adolf Hitler on May 5, 1938 in the Gulf of Naples. This image was taken from the main deck amidships on the Italian battleship Conte di Cavour. The entire Italian Navy raced*

*by the dignitaries as they steamed through the gulf aboard the newly reconstructed battleship. This was the largest naval parade put on by the Italian Royal Navy, consisting of about 190 warships, including battleships, heavy and light cruisers, destroyers, torpedo boats, and even submarines.*





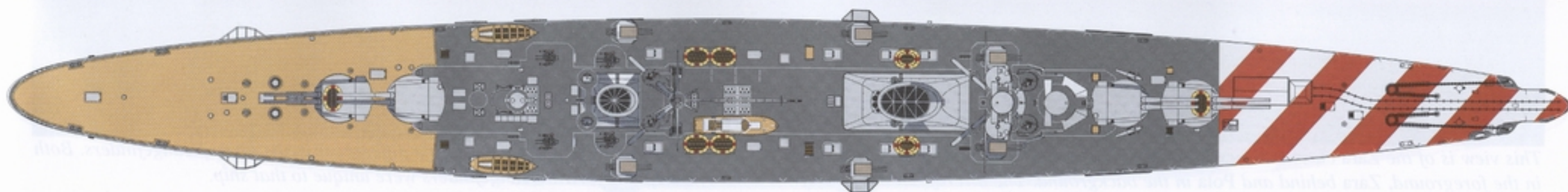
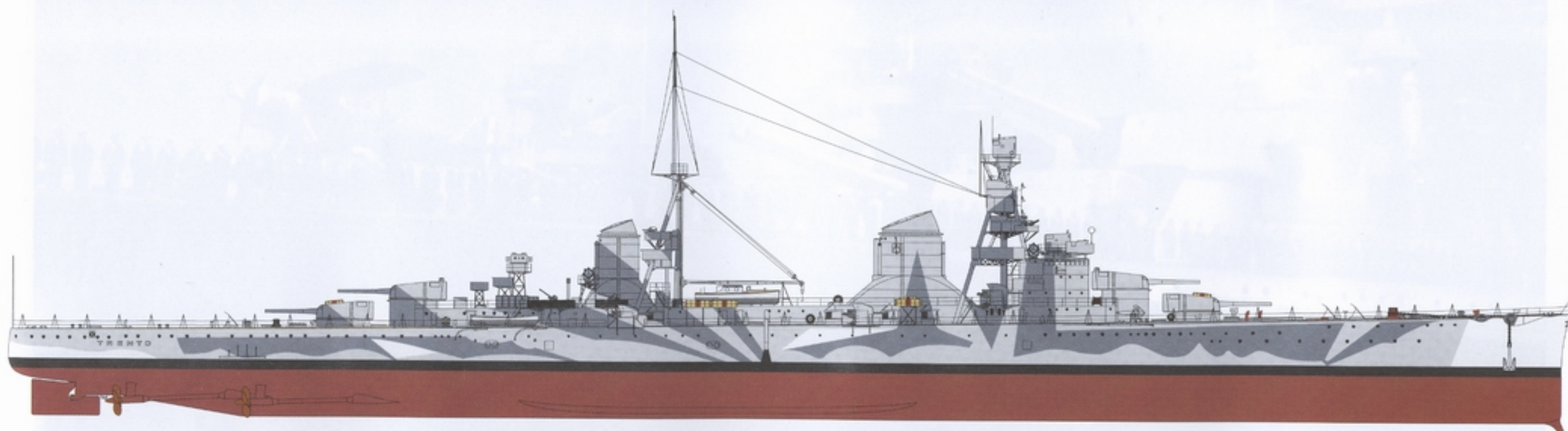
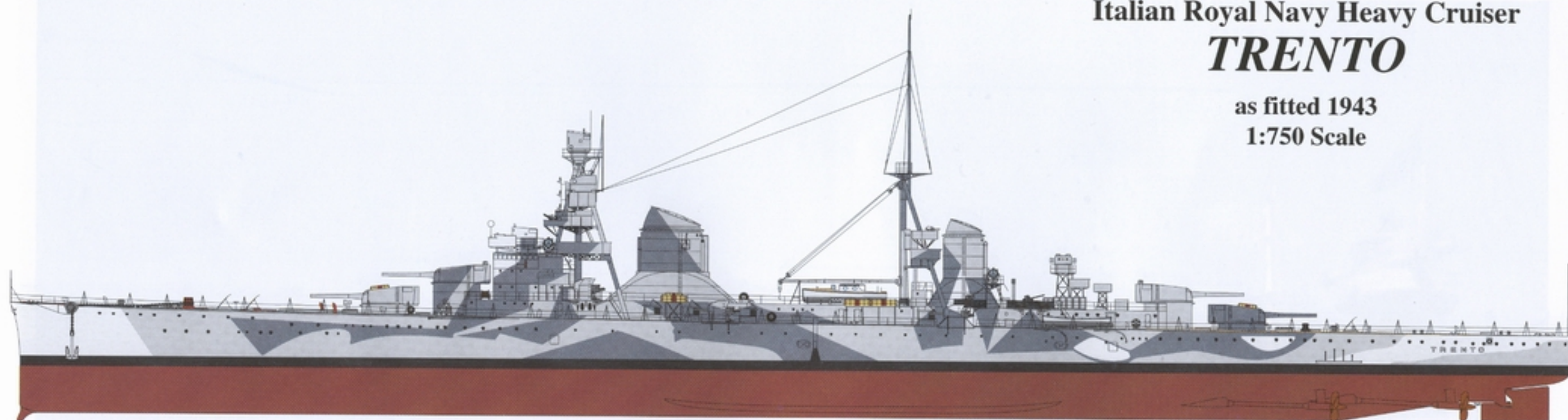
*This color photograph is of the heavy cruiser Zara. She and her sistership Fiume had a similar forward funnel construction, but different foretop rangefinders. Compare the foretop rangefinder here with that on the Fiume color photo on pages 32, 34, 38 and*

*40. This image was also taken from the deck of the battleship Conti di Cavour on May 5, 1938, in Naples Bay, by the German photographer Hugo Jäger, who was one of Adolf Hitler's personal photographers.*



Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser  
**TRENTO**

as fitted 1943  
1:750 Scale





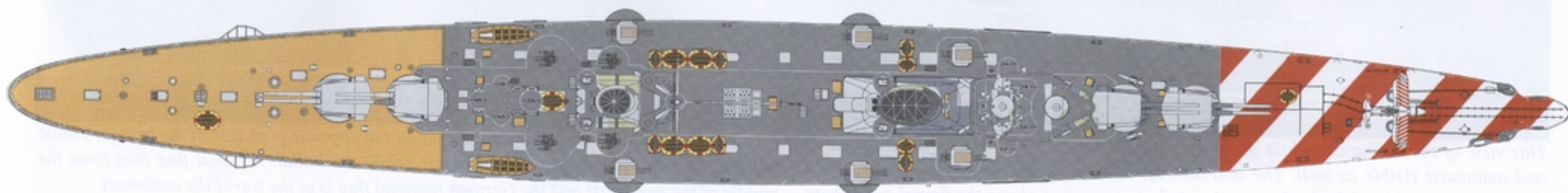
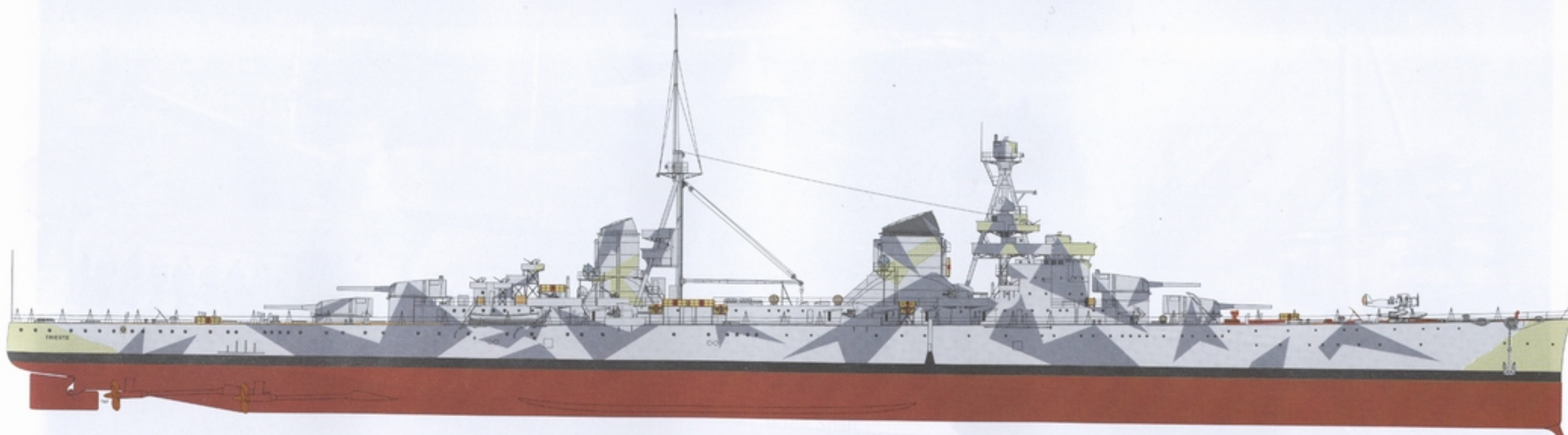
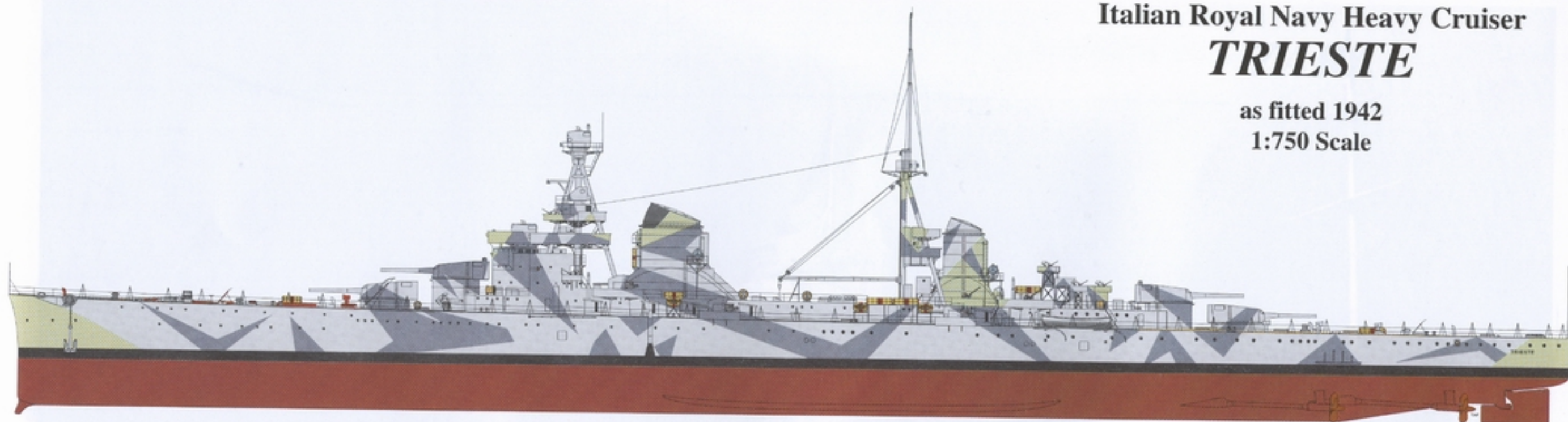


*This view is of the Zara class cruisers lined up and dressed for parade, with the Fiume in the foreground, Zara behind and Pola in the background. The aircraft on the bow of the Fiume is a Ro-43, the standard floatplane for the Italian Navy just before and during the Second World War. Note the subtle differences in the foretop rangefinders. Both Fiume's foretop and forward rangefinders were unique to that ship.*

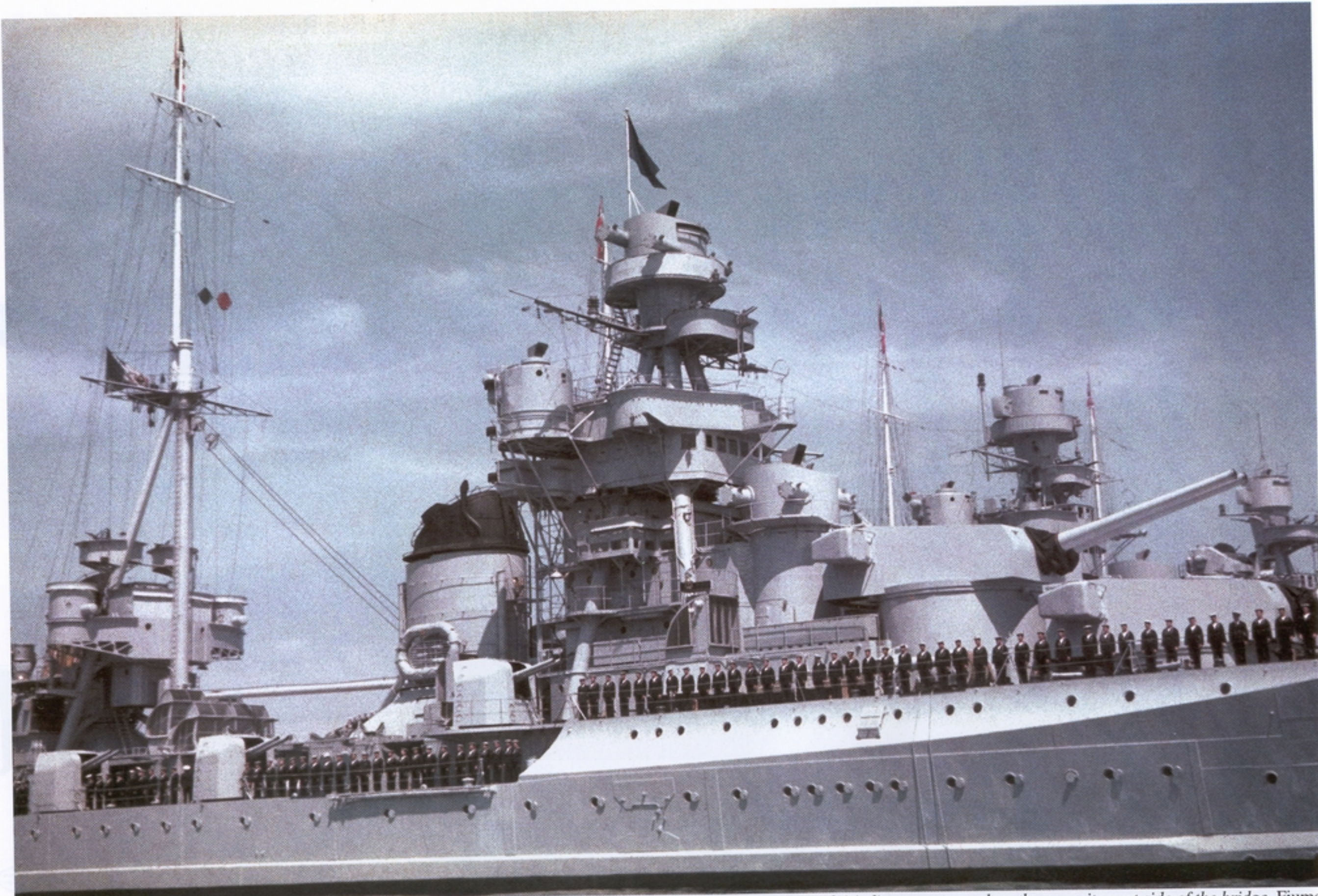


Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser  
***TRIESTE***

as fitted 1942  
1:750 Scale







*This view of the Fiume is a close up of the forward superstructure, with the fore funnel and mainmast visible as well. The anti-aircraft director is the large cylindrical object mounted on the side of the bridge, on the sixth deck up, just above the funnel cap. There*

*was another identical AA director mounted on the opposite port side of the bridge. Fiume is flying an admiral's flag on the foremast, while the Italian national flag flies from the middle of the mainmast and the German national flag is at the top of the mainmast.*

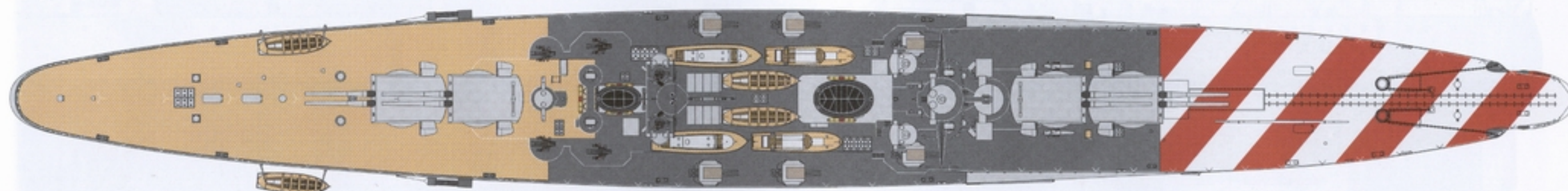
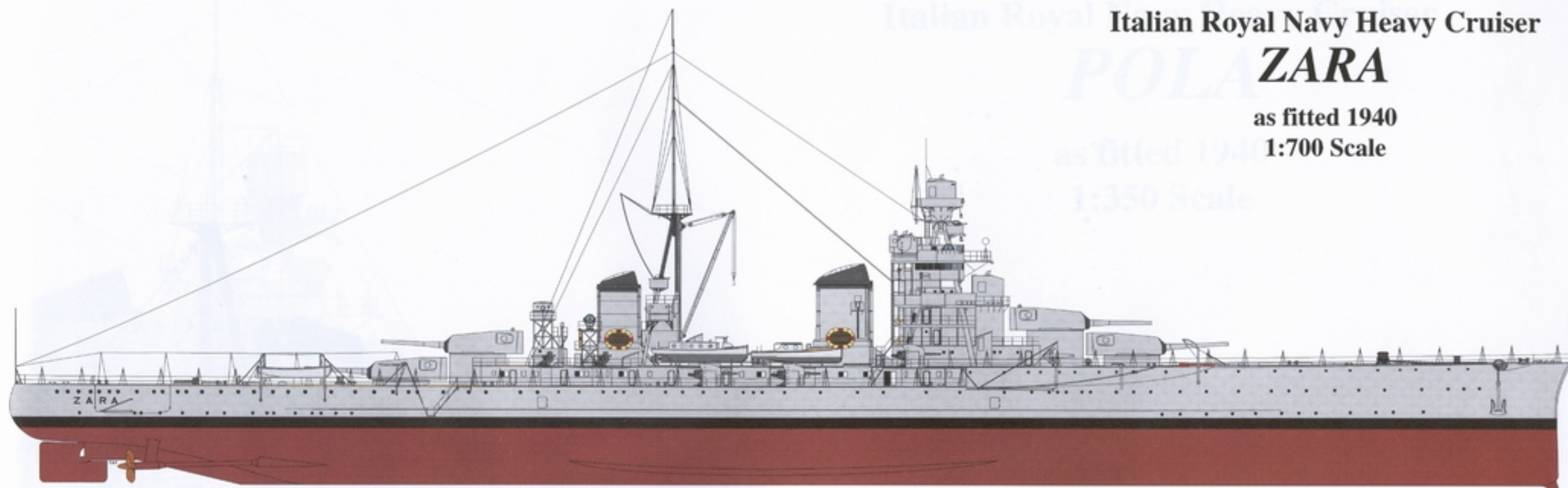


## Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser

# ZARA

as fitted 1940

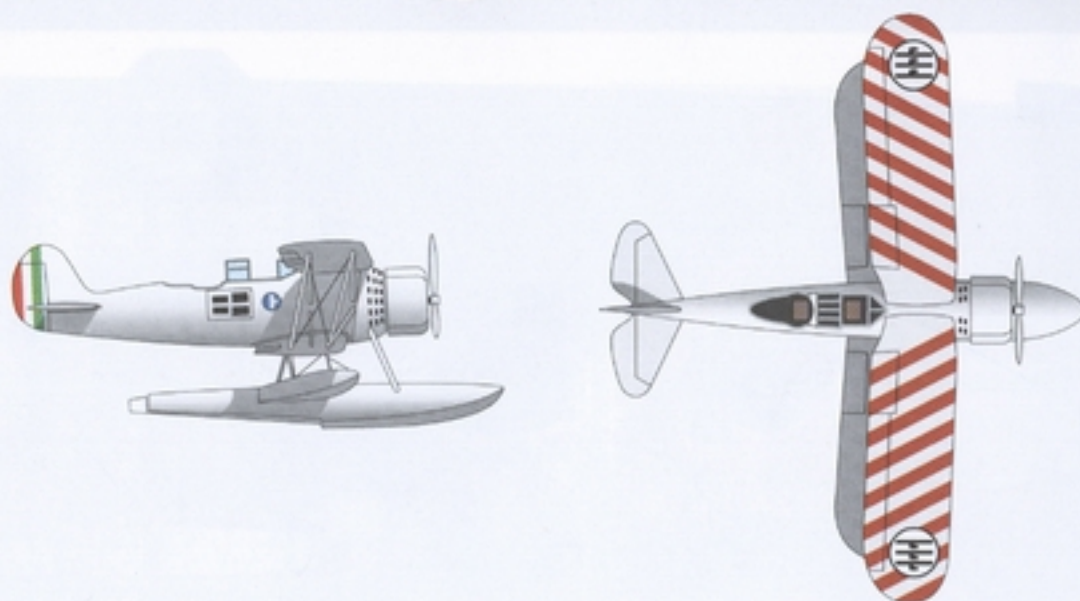
1:700 Scale



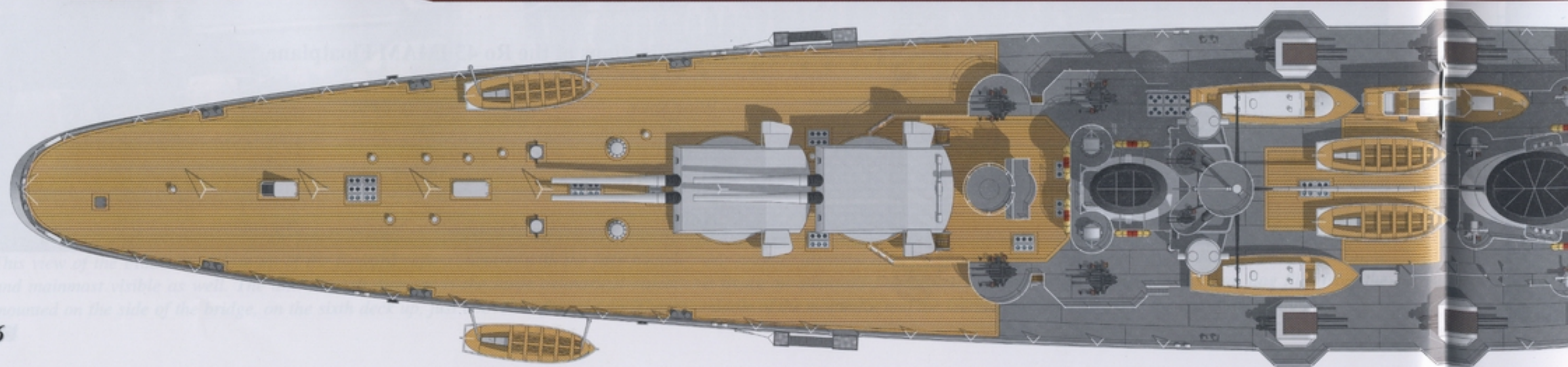
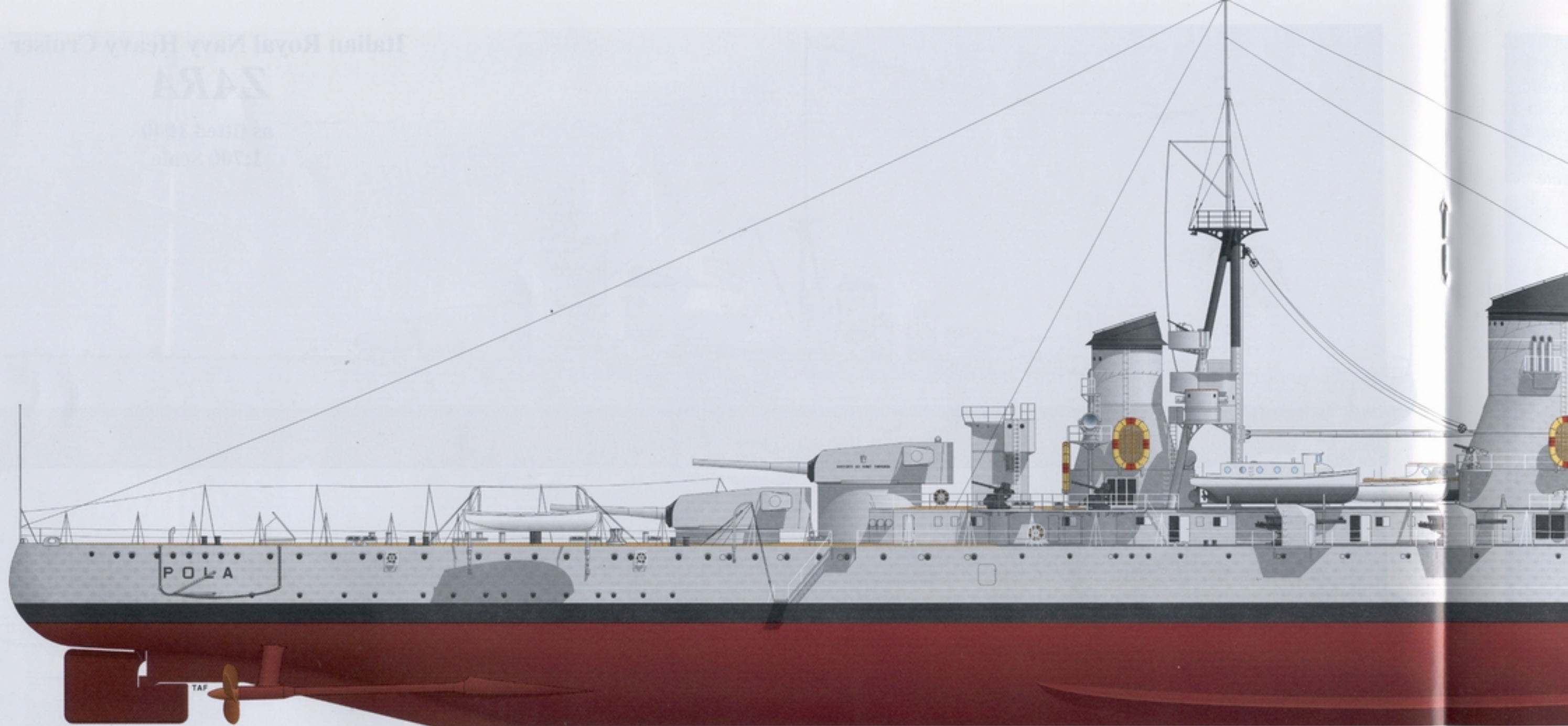
### Specifications of the Ro 43 IMAM Floatplane

Wing Span:	11.57m (37 ft. 11 in.)
Overall Length:	9.71m (31 ft. 10 in.)
Gross Weight:	2400kg (5290 lb.)
Maximum Speed:	303 km/h (188 mph.) @ 2000m (6560 ft.)

IMAM stood for *Industrie Meccaniche Aeronautiche Meridionali*.







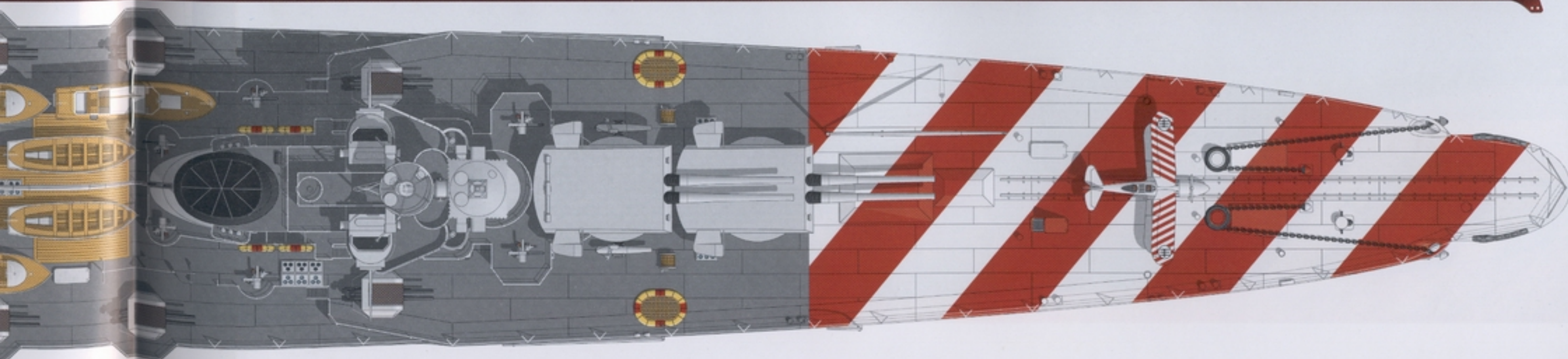
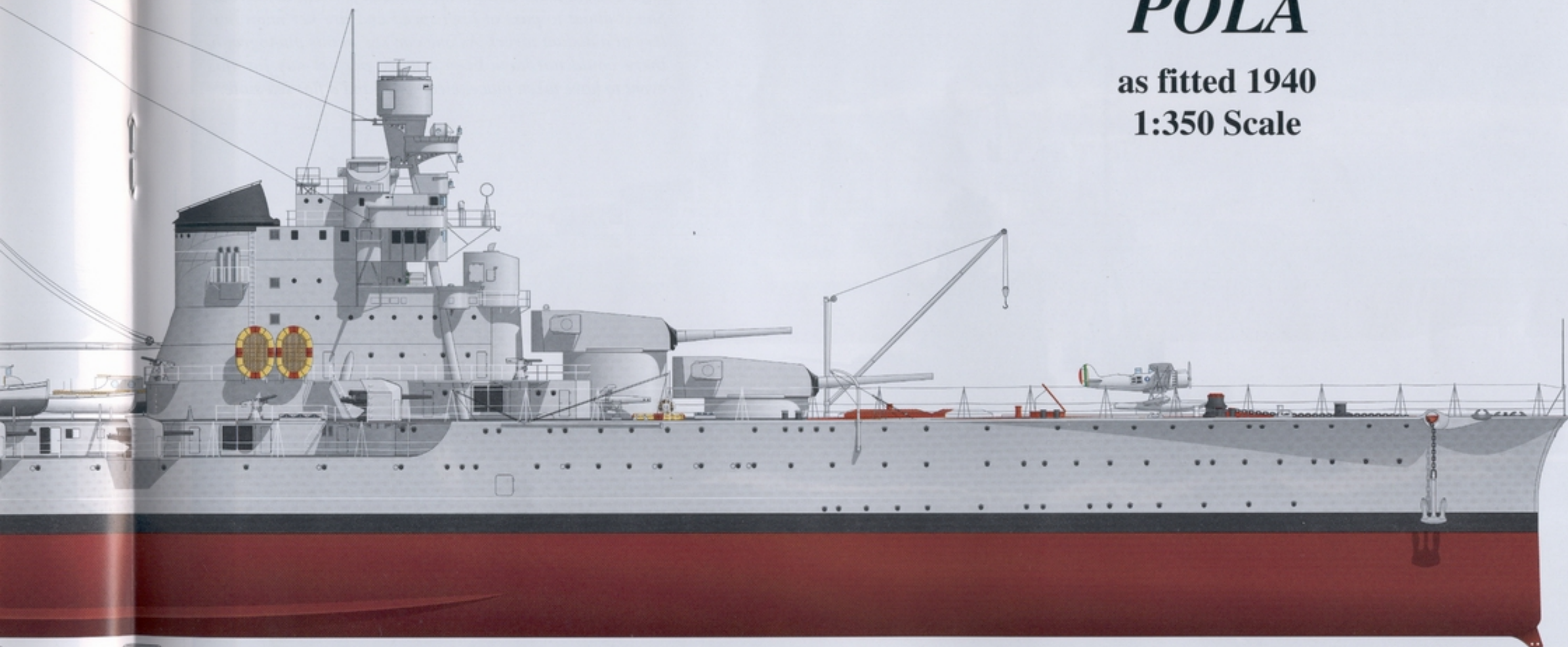


Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser

***POLA***

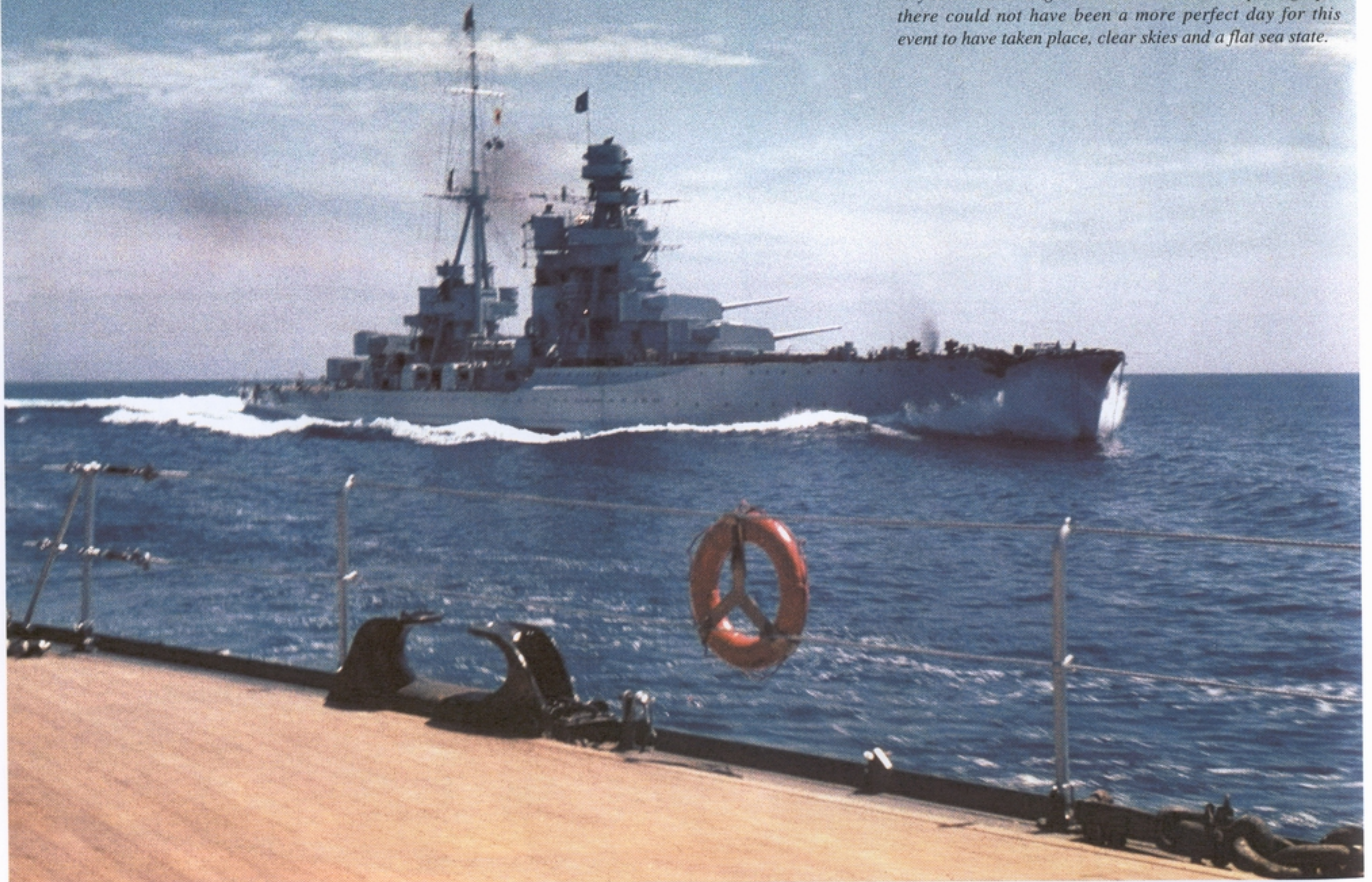
as fitted 1940

1:350 Scale





*This is a view of Fiume performing a gunnery firing drill for the dignitaries aboard the battleship Conti di Cavour. She is about to pass at high speed and fire her main battery at a distant target. As one can see in this photograph, there could not have been a more perfect day for this event to have taken place, clear skies and a flat sea state.*



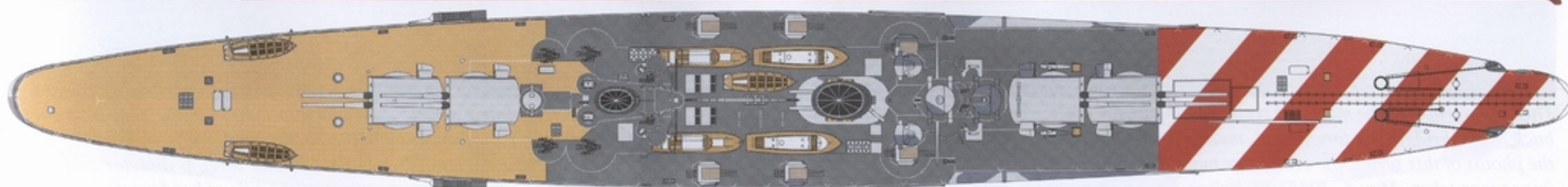
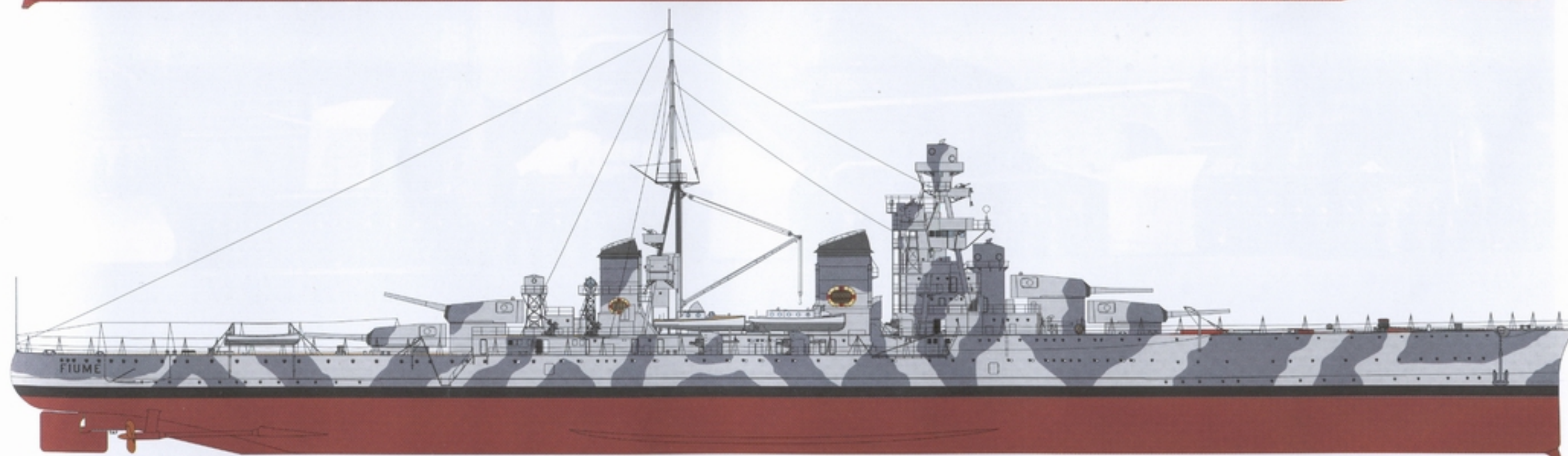
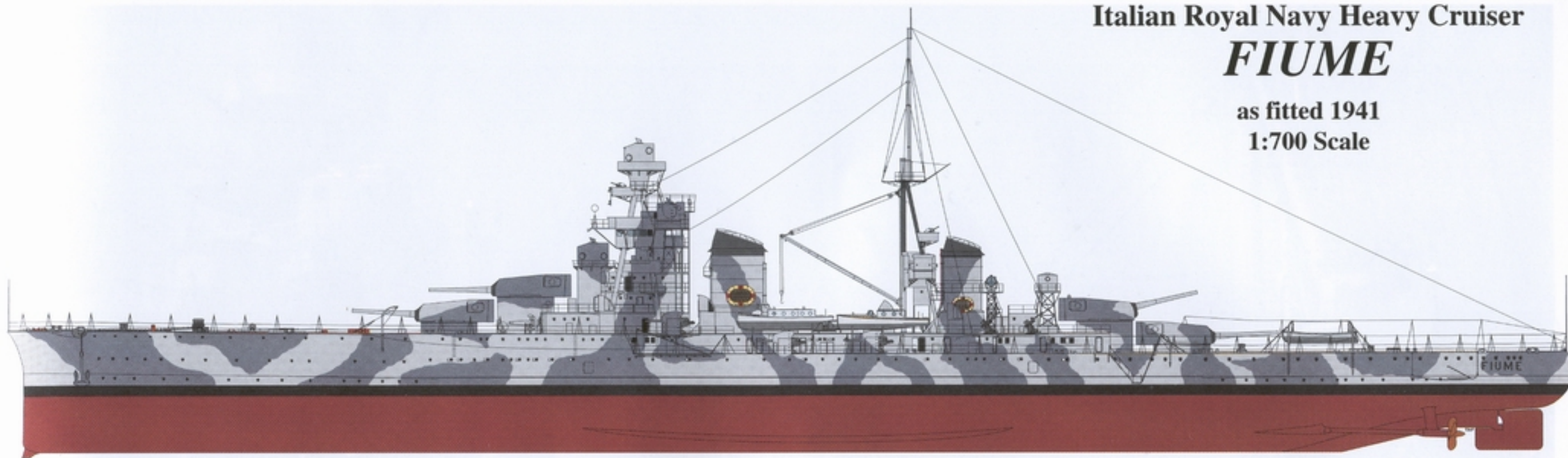


Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser

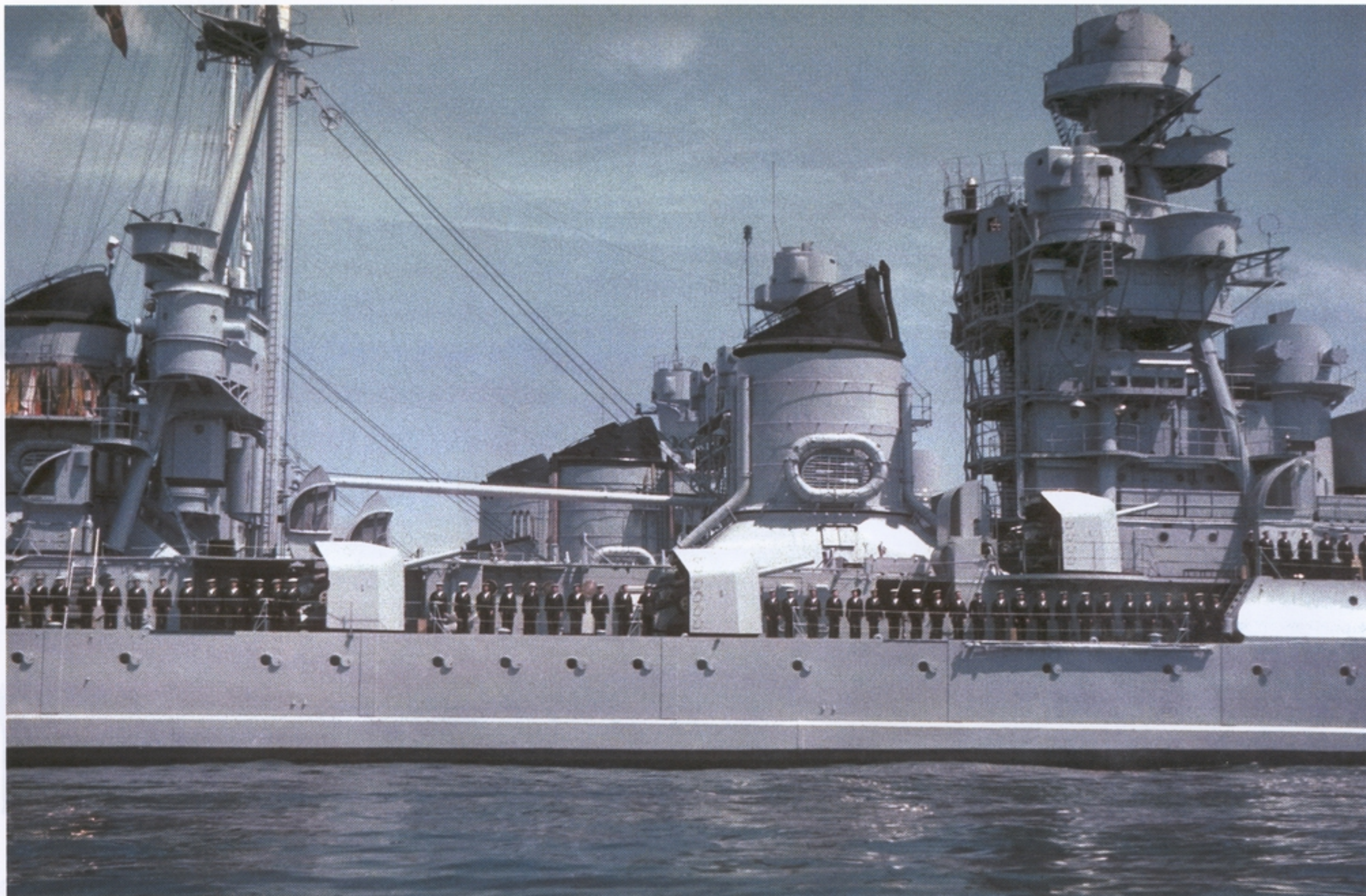
**FIUME**

as fitted 1941

1:700 Scale







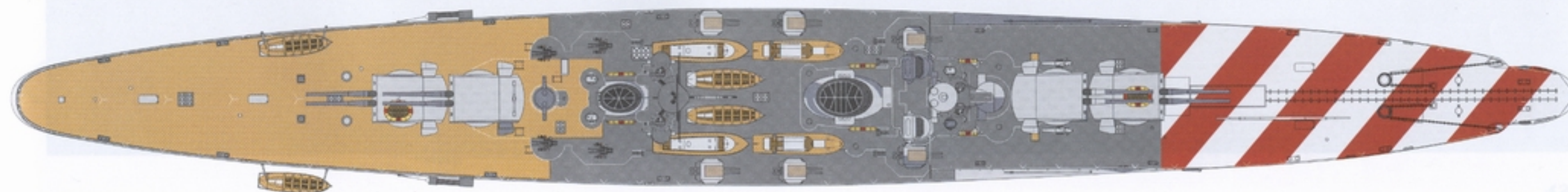
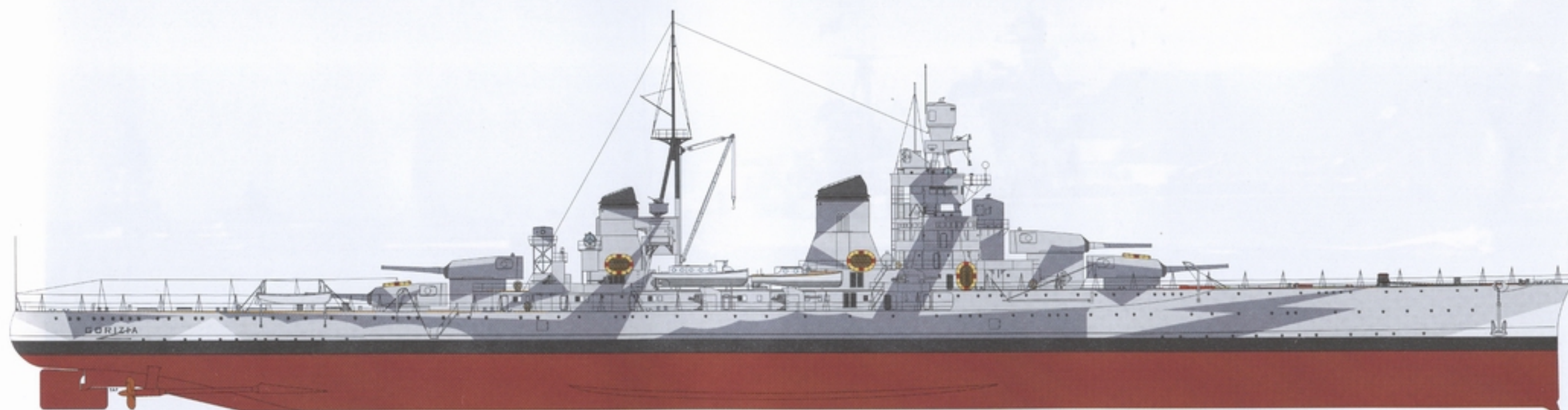
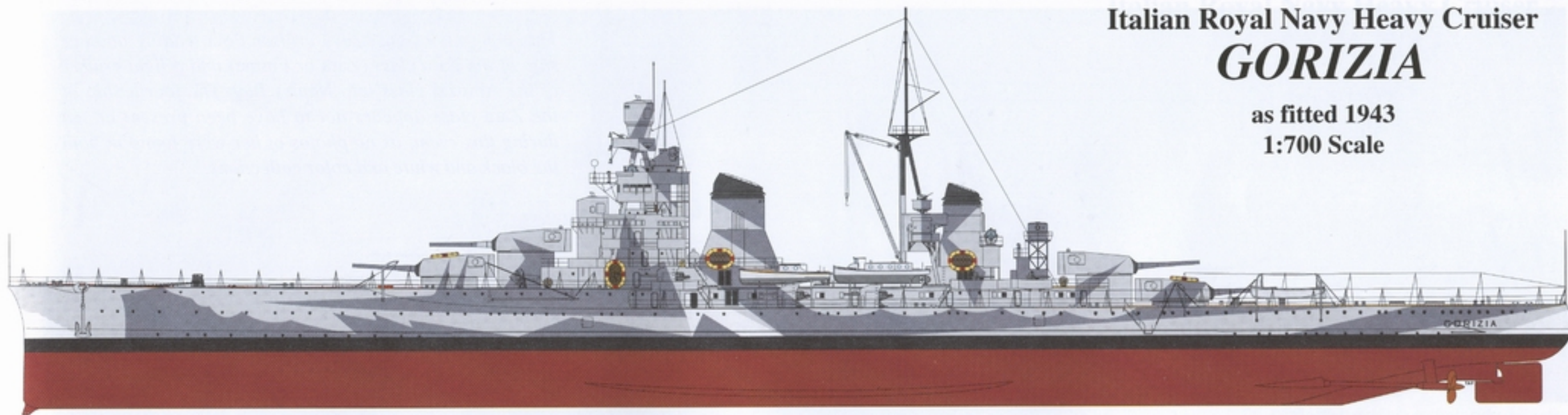
*This photograph of the midships section of the heavy cruiser Fiume shows the side and back of the bridge, the fore funnel, mainmast and a portion of the aft funnel. In all of the photos of this series, the crew were manning the rail, for the parade. At the time this image was taken, May 5, 1938, the Italian Navy was painting their ships in an overall*

*gray. The funnel caps were painted with a gloss black to help hide the soot from the boiler exhaust. The funnels of the other ships in the background are from Fiume's sisterships, the Zara and the Pola. We can identify Zara by her foretop director and the shape of her funnel and Pola by the three steam pipes on the side of her funnel.*



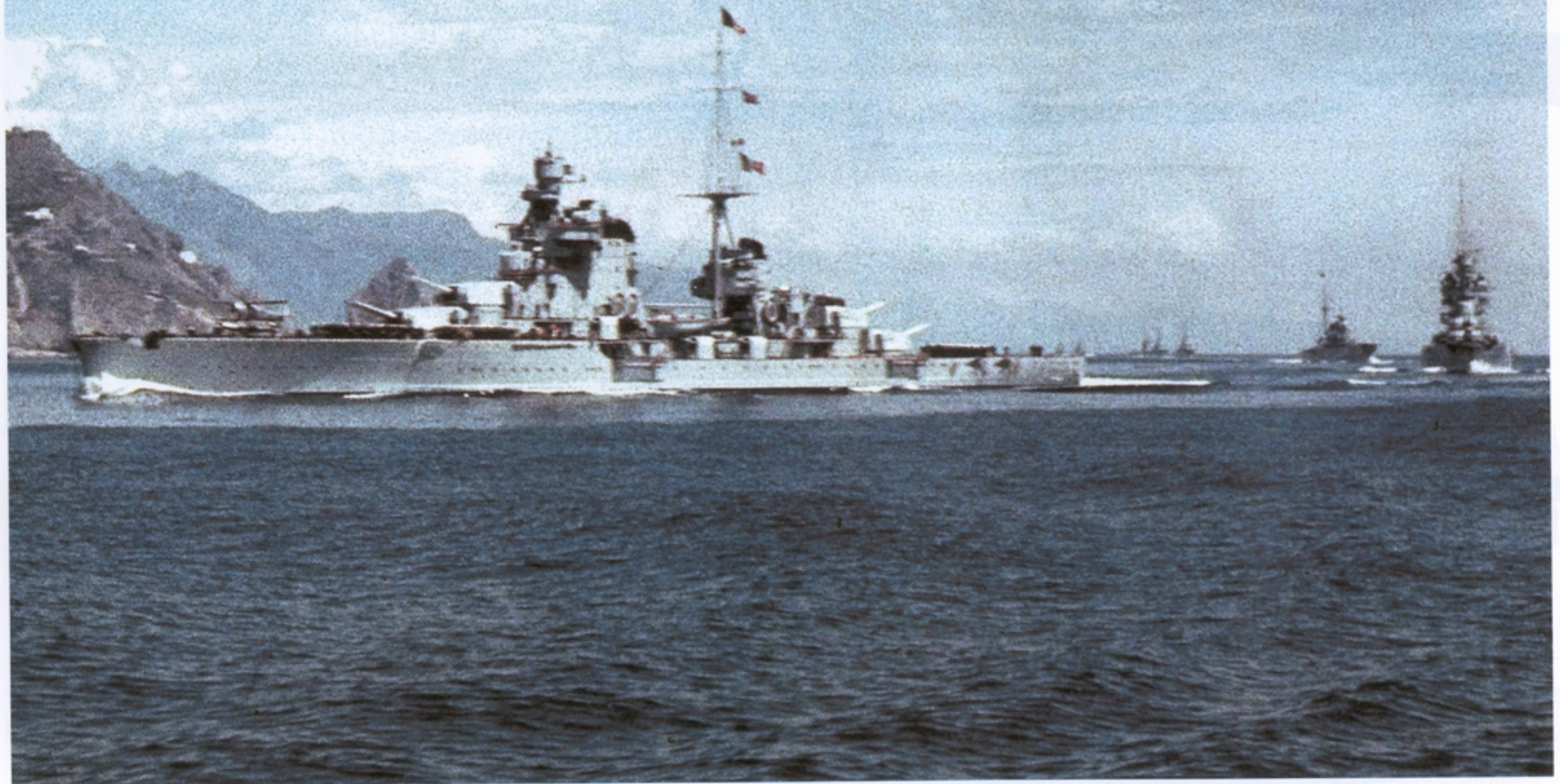
Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser  
**GORIZIA**

as fitted 1943  
1:700 Scale





*This image is of the heavy cruiser Pola leading another ship of the Zara class (Zara or Fiume) and a light cruiser of the Abruzzi class into Naples Bay. The fourth ship of the Zara class appears not to have been present at sea during this event, as no photos of her were found in both the black and white and color collections.*

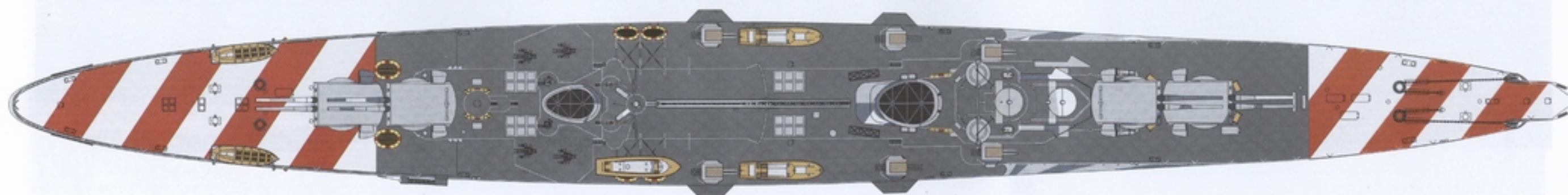
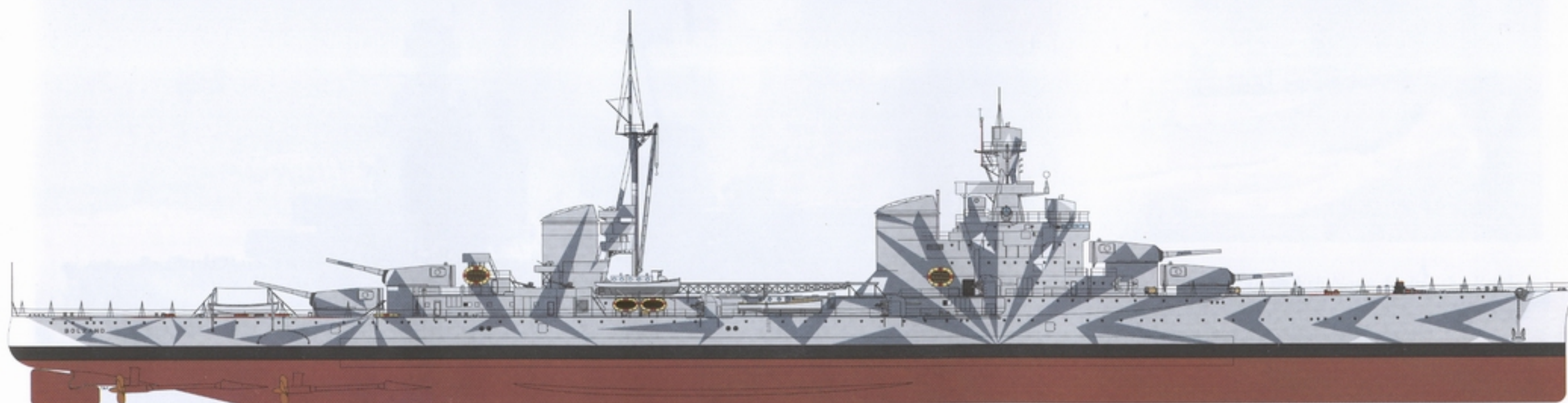
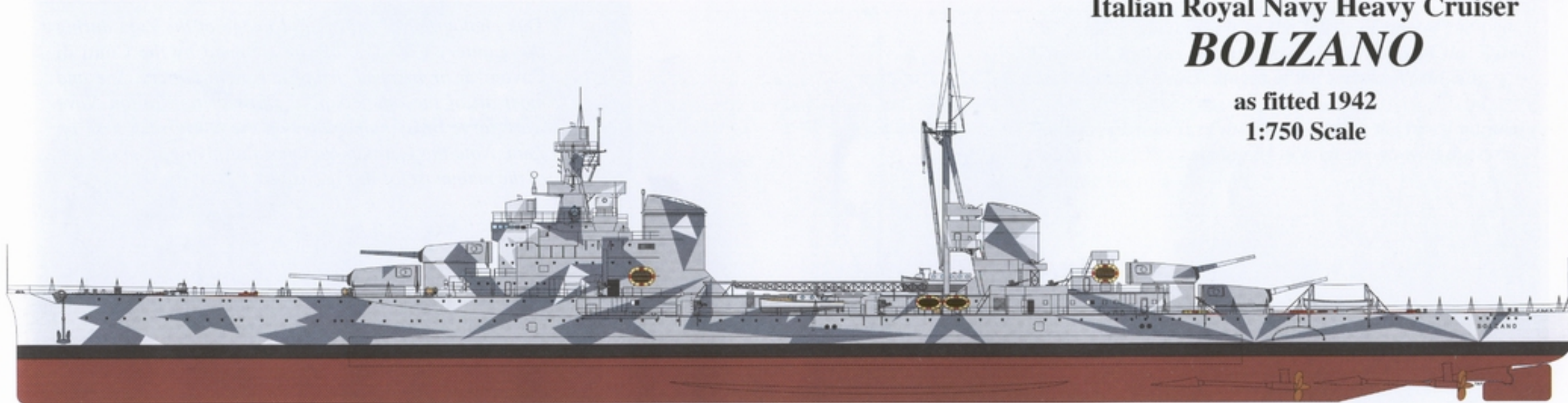


*image was taken, May 5, 1936, the Italian Navy was preparing for the invasion of Ethiopia. The ship's funnel is visible in the background.*



Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser  
***BOLZANO***

as fitted 1942  
1:750 Scale

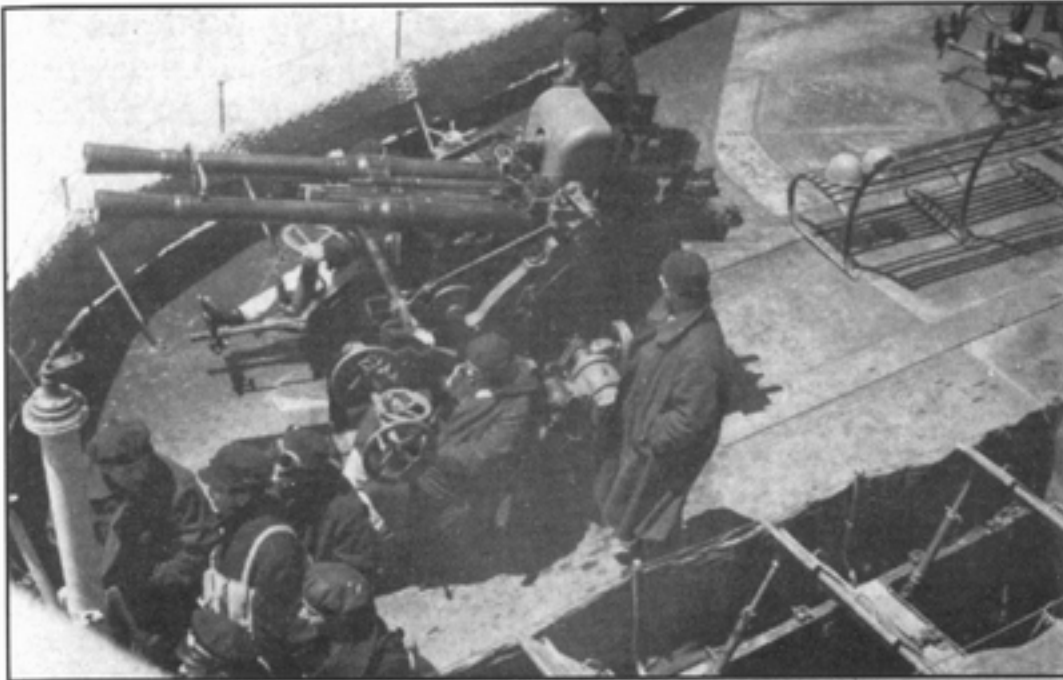




*This photograph is a beautiful image of the Zara during the gunnery exercise, as she steamed by the Conti di Cavour at high speed, firing her main battery. She and most all of the other capital ships of the Italian Navy wore large brass nameplates on the stern, seen here on Zara. Note the German National flag flying from the top of the mainmast for this occasion.*

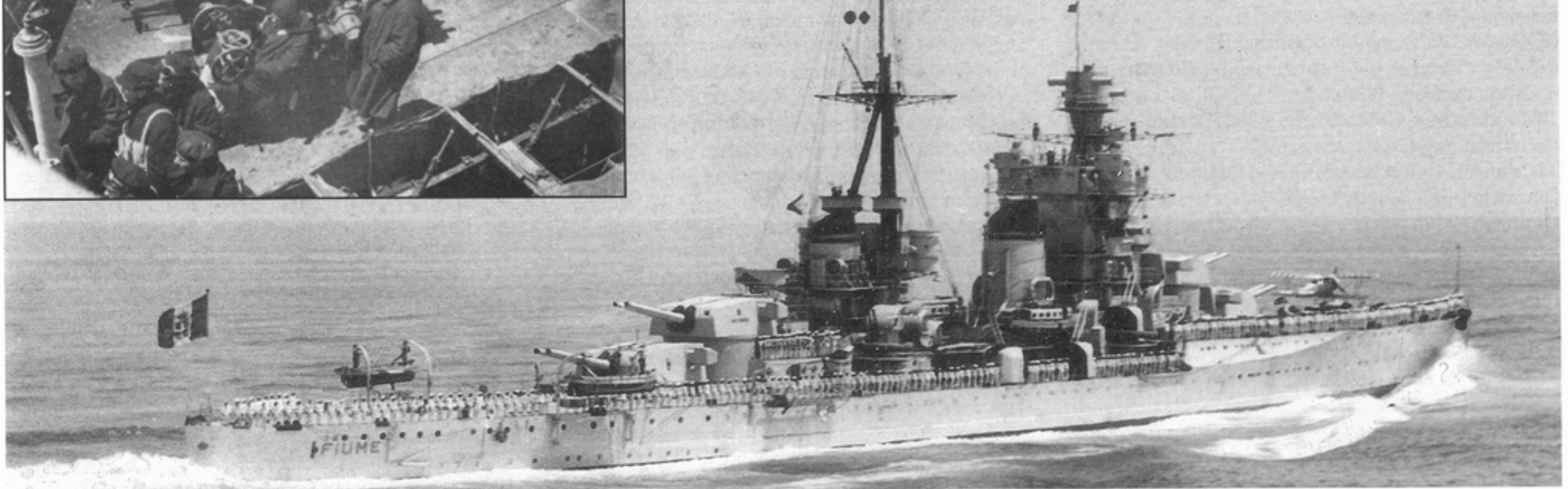






*The smaller photograph to the left is of one of the twin 37mm AA mounts aboard one of the ships of the Zara class during the early stages of the Second World War.*

*The image below is of the Fiume during the naval parade on May 5, 1938, steaming by at high speed, with the crew manning the rail.*



*Fiume in action against the British Navy during the Battle of Punta Stilo on July 9, 1940. She was still painted in her overall standard navy gray at that time.*



# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser *Gorizia*

**17 March 1930:** *Gorizia* was laid down at the Cantiere Odero Terni Orlando in Livorno.

**28 December 1930:** Launched.

**23 December 1931:** *Gorizia* Commissioned, became part of the Second Division.

**13 August 1932:** *Gorizia* in naval maneuvers off Naples in honor of King Victor Emmanuel III.

**25 August 1932:** Flagship of Second Division.

**6-7 July 1933:** *Gorizia* was on hand for Il Duce's naval review in the Gulf of Naples.

**16 September 1933:** *Gorizia* transferred to First Division as flagship.

**29 June 1934:** Received her battle flag from the city of *Gorizia* in a ceremony at Trieste.

**October 1934:** *Gorizia* escorted Italian royal yacht *Savoia* on cruise to the eastern Mediterranean, Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. The royal family makes official colonial port calls at Berbera and Mogadishu in Somalia.

**31 December 1934:** Flag transferred to *Pola*.

**3 June 1935:** Flagship of First Division, at Taranto.

**24 July 1936:** *Gorizia* departed Taranto to protect Italian interests and evacuate citizens at Gijon, northern Spain.

**29 July 1936:** Passed through the Straits of Gibraltar after a brief stop at Messina.

**31 July 1936:** Reached Republican held Gijon and evacuated Italian nationals the next day.

**1-4 August 1936:** *Gorizia* put in at the French resort Le Verdon-sur-Mer to transfer Italian nationals.

**5 August 1936:** Departed France for Germany, thru the English Channel, North Sea, and finally traversing the Kiel Canal.

**8 August 1936:** Arrived at Kiel and anchored in company with German battleship *Admiral Graf Spee*, cruiser *Konigsberg*, and British cruiser *HMS Neptune* for a naval review. *Gorizia* also was present to show the flag in Germany during the 1936 Olympic Games' sailing events at Kiel.

**19 August 1936:** *Gorizia* departed Kiel for Tangier.

**24 August 1936:** Arrived at Tangier. *Gorizia* departed later that day for the Mediterranean. That evening she suffered a massive explosion in her forward aviation fuel

bunker, which breached the hull plating near the port bow. The damaged cruiser returned to Tangier

**25 August 1936:** *Gorizia* was towed to nearby Gibraltar for emergency repairs. During her drydocking, British officials took a close look at *Gorizia* and determined that she displaced more than her Washington Treaty allotment of 10,000 tons, but no formal reports were filed.

**9 September 1936:** Departed Gibraltar for Italy.

**11 September 1936:** Arrived at La Spezia.

**27 November 1936:** *Gorizia* and the Italian fleet honor the Hungarian regent, Admiral Horthy, with a naval review in the Gulf of Naples.

**17 May 1937:** First Division flag transferred from *Gorizia* to *Fiume*.

**7 June 1937:** Naval review in the Gulf of Naples.

**5 May 1938:** *Gorizia* was in the Gulf of Naples to take part in Naval Review H for Adolf Hitler's state visit.

**7 March 1939:** *Gorizia* and the First Division set out from Taranto to intercept a Spanish Republican naval force trying to reach the Black Sea, which they divert to French shelter at Bizerte, Tunisia, where the Spanish ships were interned.

**7-9 April 1939:** *Gorizia* participated in naval support of the Italian occupation of Albania.

**5 June 1939:** *Gorizia* and other Italian warships were in the Gulf of Naples to greet Spanish Nationalist foreign minister Serrano Suner and other dignitaries arriving from Cadiz aboard the Italian light cruiser *Duca d'Aosta* for a celebration of their victory over the Republicans.

**10 June 1939:** *Gorizia* and other Italian warships are in Venice to observe Navy Day.

**10 June 1940:** At the point of Italy's entry into the war, *Gorizia* was a component, with sisterships *Zara* and *Fiume*, of the First Division, First Squadron.

**11-12 June 1940:** During the First Division's inconclusive patrol for enemy ships, *Gorizia* fired on a British submarine that dives without incident.

**8-9 July 1940:** *Gorizia* took part in the Battle of Punta Stilo, trading fire with British cruisers and evading aerial and submarine attacks.

**30 July-1 August 1940:** *Gorizia*, *Trento*, *Pola*, and other

warships escort a convoy to Libya.

**16 August 1940:** *Gorizia* took part in gunnery exercises off Naples' La Motte rock formation.

**29 August 1940:** Gunnery exercises, then *Gorizia* transferred from Naples to Taranto.

**30 August 1940:** Arrived at Taranto.

**31 August 1940-2 September 1940:** *Gorizia* took part in the abortive sortie against the British Operation Hats, later returning to Taranto.

**7-9 September 1940:** *Gorizia* patrolled in vicinity of Sicily without enemy contact, and put in at Palermo.

**11 September 1940:** *Gorizia* returned to Taranto.

**23-24 September 1940:** Gunnery exercises.

**6 November 1940:** Gunnery exercises.

**11-12 November 1940:** *Gorizia* was anchored in Mar Grande during the British aerial attack on Taranto, sustained no damage.

**12 November 1940:** Transferred to Naples.

**26-28 November 1940:** *Gorizia* took part in the Battle of Cape Teulada, trading fire with British cruisers and downing an enemy aircraft.

**15 December 1940:** Following the aerial bombardment of Naples the previous day, *Gorizia* transferred temporarily to La Maddalena.

**Late January 1941:** Transferred to Taranto.

**29 January 1941:** *Gorizia* maneuvered with *Zara* in the Gulf of Taranto.

**28 February 1941-7 May 1941:** Yard work at La Spezia spared *Gorizia* from taking part in Operation Gaudo, 28-29 March with the rest of the ill-fated First Division.

**8 May 1941:** *Gorizia*, lone survivor of the First Division, joined the Third Division (Trento, Trieste, and Bolzano), and was based at Messina.

**26-28 May 1941:** *Gorizia* assisted *Trieste* and *Bolzano* in escorting convoys returning from Libya.

**25 June-1 July 1941:** *Gorizia* and *Trieste* join the Twelfth Destroyer Squadron in escorting a fast convoy of transatlantic liners from Taranto to Tripoli and back.

**23-26 August 1941:** *Gorizia* joined the Italian fleet's effort to disrupt an incursion by British Force H, a component of Operation Mincemeat.



**9-11 September 1941:** *Gorizia* took part in the anti-aircraft defense against repeated Allied bombardments of Messina. The ship was undamaged.

**26-29 September 1941:** Joined *Trieste* and other units in the unsuccessful attempt to head off Operation Halberd.

**29 September-10 October 1941:** *Gorizia* operated briefly from La Maddalena, later returning to Messina.

**21 November 1941:** Allied bombardment of Messina caused extensive upperworks splinter damage to *Gorizia*. Departed that same day for convoy escort duty.

**16-17 December 1941:** *Gorizia* engaged British Royal Navy vessels in the First Battle of Sirte Gulf.

**25 January 1942:** Visited by Luftwaffe Generaloberst Bruno Loerzer at Messina.

**30 January 1942:** Visited by Italian Crown Prince Umberto, with Luftwaffe Air Marshal Hermann Goering, who was in Sicily inspecting German bases.

**14 February 1942:** During a sortie to hunt enemy shipping, *Gorizia* came under attack by torpedo bombers and submarines, returned to Messina unscathed.

**21-24 February 1942:** *Gorizia* joined battleship *Duilio* and cruisers *Trento* and *Bande Nere* to escort convoy K7 to Tripoli.

**22-23 March 1942:** During the Second Battle of Sirte Gulf, *Gorizia* repeatedly engaged British destroyers and light cruisers.

**Early May 1942:** The eight inch rifles on *Gorizia* were relined at Messina.

**25-26 May 1942:** During Allied air attacks on Messina, *Gorizia* again sustained only splinter damage.

**27-28 May 1942:** Repeated air attacks on Messina did not harm *Gorizia*, which departed for Taranto.

**8-11 June 1942:** Taranto was subjected to nearly continuous air attacks, none of which damaged *Gorizia*.

**15-16 June 1942:** The battle during mid-June, *Gorizia* successfully evaded three strikes by torpedo bombers, but *Trento* was struck by an aerial torpedo and later sunk by submarine HMS Umbra. On return to Taranto, *Gorizia*'s Ro.43 floatplane went missing while seeking the main enemy force, and was presumed lost.

**5 July 1942:** Arrived at Messina.

**17 July 1942:** *Gorizia*, at Messina, hosts an official visit from Crown Prince Umberto.

**12-13 August 1942:** During mid-August operations, the zig-zagging *Gorizia* was targeted by a British submarine's torpedo, which she narrowly manages to evade.

**27 August 1942:** Crown Prince Umberto again visits *Gorizia* at Messina.

**9-10 December 1942:** Because of the Allied advances in North Africa, Messina was increasingly vulnerable to air attacks and abandoned as a major Italian naval base. The Third Division departed Sicily for the relative protection of La Maddalena in Sardinia.

**10 April 1943:** USAAF bombardment of La Maddalena sank *Trieste* and seriously damaged *Gorizia*, directly hit by three bombs. One penetrated No. 3 turret and exploded within the ship, dislodging the after armor plating, the other two struck the main deck to port, forward, heavily damaging the superstructure. Several near-misses exploded close aboard, deforming plates and causing hull breaches, but quick and effective damage control kept *Gorizia* seaworthy.

**12 April 1943:** *Gorizia* departed La Maddalena for repairs at La Spezia, arriving there the next day.

**19 April 1943:** While docked at La Spezia, *Gorizia* received light splinter damage from an Allied bomb striking the adjacent pier.

**20 April 1943:** The Crown Prince again visited *Gorizia*.

**30 April 1943:** With its two surviving components *Bolzano* and *Gorizia* now out of action indefinitely, the Third Division was officially dissolved.

**4 May 1943:** *Gorizia* entered drydock at La Spezia for hull assessment and repairs.

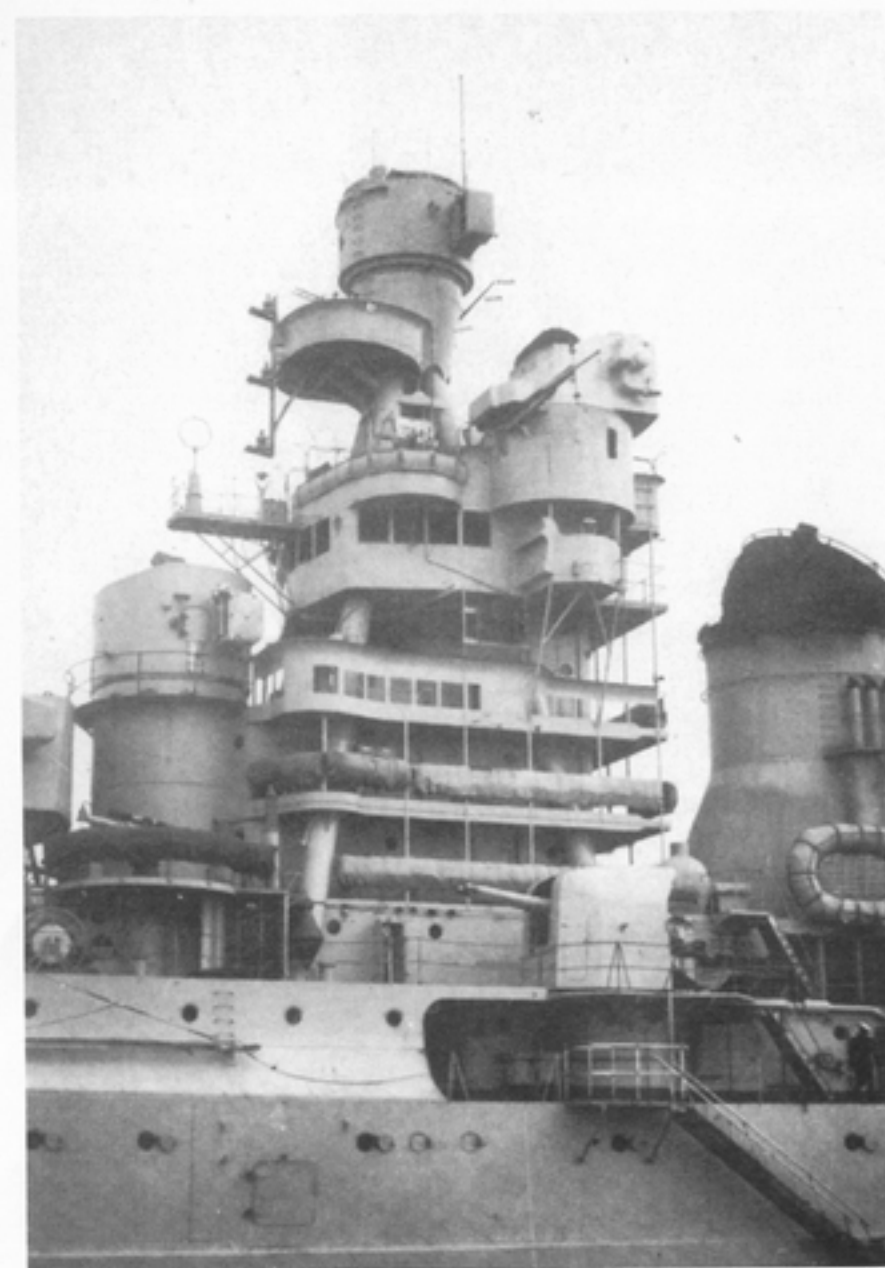
**9-10 September 1943:** The Armistice found *Gorizia* still in drydock, while German forces begin to occupy La Spezia. *Gorizia*'s captain at first orders the sabotage of the helpless cruiser by flooding the dock and opening her sea chests, but that effort was abandoned with the realization that the damaged vessel was already of little material use to the Germans, and the skeleton Italian crew departs with the ship's battle flag. German troops overrun the naval arsenal and plunder *Gorizia*, which they eventually remove from drydock and anchor in the harbor.

**21-22 June 1944:** British and co-belligerent Italian frogmen on "Chariots" penetrated the harbor of La Spezia

with the intent to sink numerous submarines, as well as the derelict *Bolzano* and *Gorizia* where they lie, in order to prevent the Germans from using them as blockships at the harbor entrances. This operation is only successful in the case of *Bolzano*, while *Gorizia* remained afloat but still completely abandoned.

**April 1945:** Allied forces entering the naval arsenal at La Spezia discovered the sunken *Bolzano* and the partially floating but heavily listing *Gorizia*, adjacent to the Garibaldi pier. Though she is in relatively recoverable and usable condition, the decision is taken by Italian authorities to discard *Gorizia* due to the likely great expense of repairs at La Spezia's damaged facility.

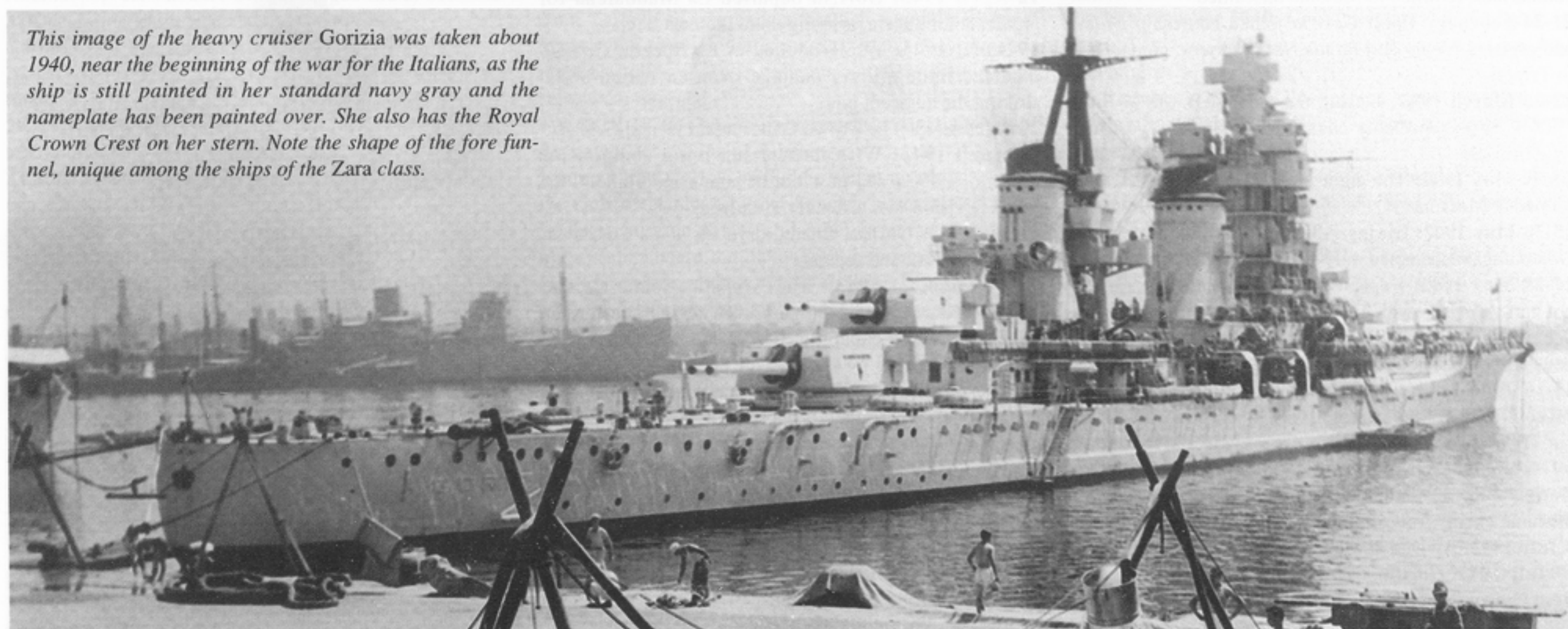
**27 February 1947:** *Gorizia* was stricken from the Italian naval register, and is consigned to the ship breakers.





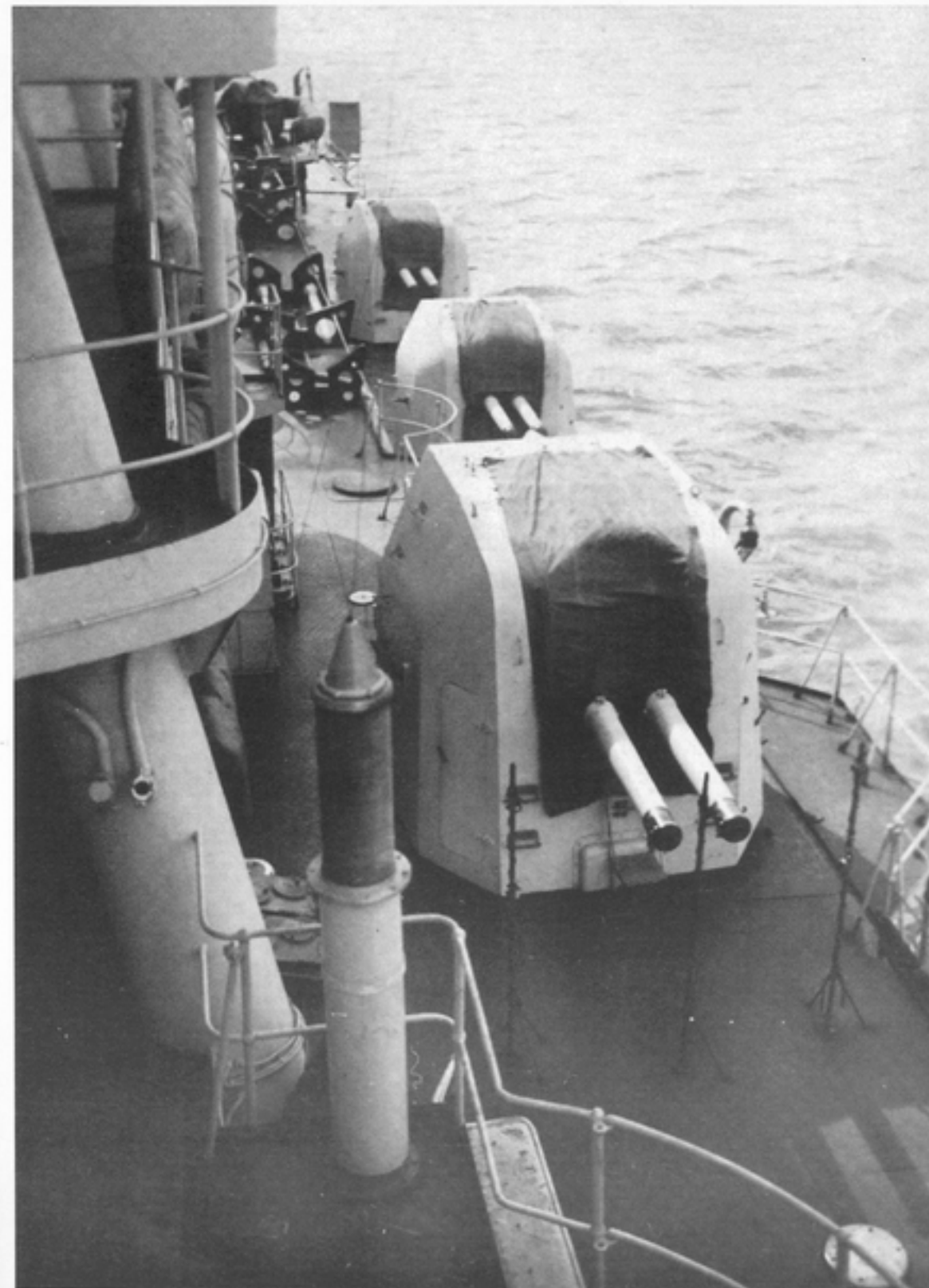
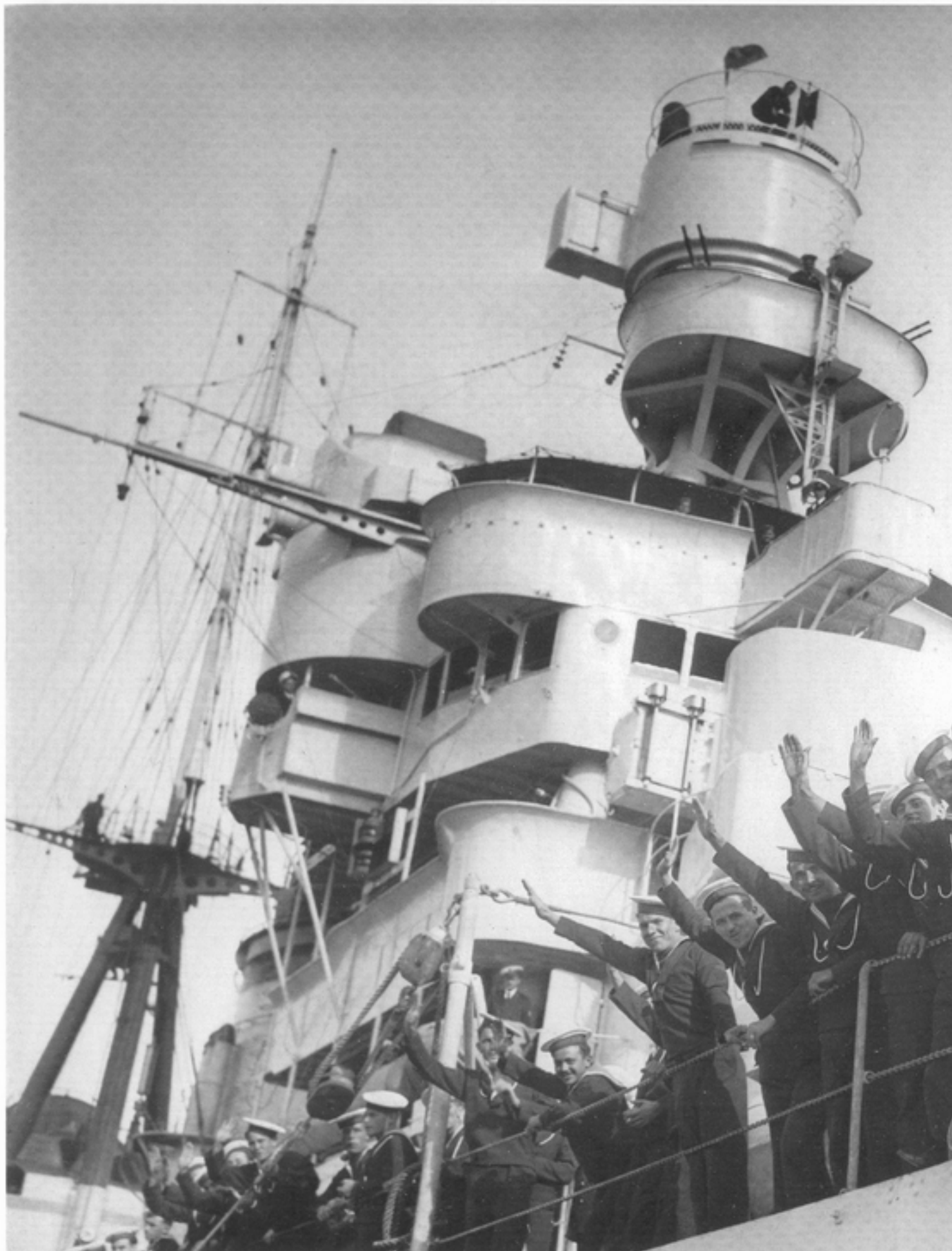


*Gorizia on her preliminary sea trials, minus the main turrets, their rifles and numerous other equipment on the superstructure. Speeds measured at this time were published as being 36 to 38 knots, but are unrealistic as the ships were substantially lighter than as completed, when the top speed was more like 32 knots.*



*This image of the heavy cruiser Gorizia was taken about 1940, near the beginning of the war for the Italians, as the ship is still painted in her standard navy gray and the nameplate has been painted over. She also has the Royal Crown Crest on her stern. Note the shape of the fore funnel, unique among the ships of the Zara class.*





*The image to the left is of the bridge of the Gorizia. Note the difference in the configuration of the foretop director to that of Fiume. There are also subtle differences in the bridge structures of the Zara, Fiume and Gorizia.*

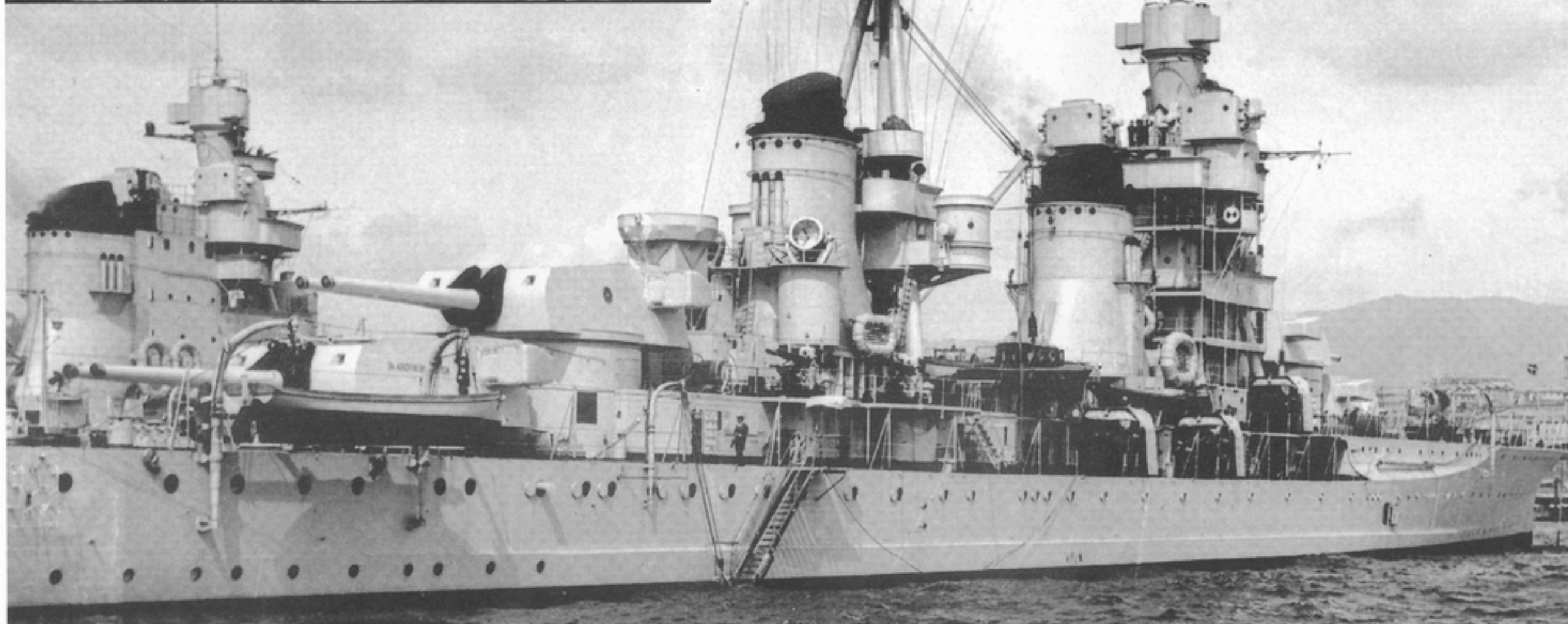
*The image above is of the three twin 100mm AA mounts on the port side of Gorizia. The steel decks of these ships were painted dark gray. The item in the foreground is an antenna lead.*





*In the image to the left, the Gorizia is the ship in the background, with either Zara or Fiume in the foreground.*

*The primary photograph on this page is of the Gorizia, with one of her sisterships, Pola, in the background. The size and height of the mainmast is to facilitate longer range communication with her radio equipment.*





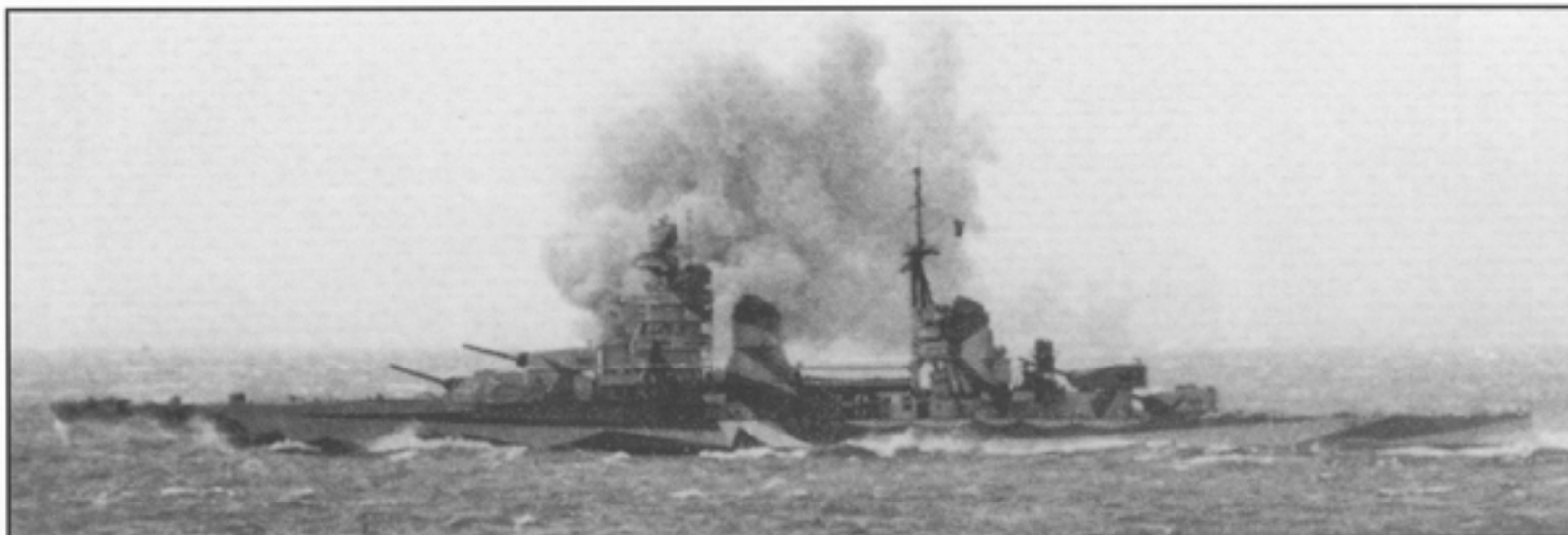


*The small inset image above is of the Gorizia during the Battle of Punta Stilo in July 1940.*

*The main image on this page is of the aft turret crews on the aft deck of the Gorizia, about 1941. The number of life rafts carried aboard the vessels of the Italian Navy were increased during the war, as the ships boats were no longer carried in an effort to reduce topside weight and flammable items.*







*The small image of Gorizia in her camouflage pattern was taken on March 22, 1942 at the Second Battle of Sirte. She has just fired her after main battery towards the warships of the British Navy.*

*The image below is of the Gorizia just prior to the Second Battle of Sirte, taken about February 1942. She was just painted in her camouflage pattern about that time.*





# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser *Pola*

**17 March 1931:** The keel for the *Pola* was laid down at Cantiere Odero Terni Orlando in Livorno, Italy.

**5 December 1931:** *Pola* was launched.

**21 Decem<sup>r</sup> 1932:** Commissioned.

**6-7 July 1933:** *Pola* hosted Mussolini during his observation of an Italian naval review in the Gulf of Naples.

**29 June 1934:** Received her battle flag in a ceremony at Pola (now Pula, Croatia).

**3 September-3 October 1936:** Departed Gaeta.

**5-10 September 1936:** *Pola* stationed at Barcelona, protecting Italian interests early in the Spanish Civil War.

**10 September-3 October 1936:** Stationed at Palma de Mallorca, protecting Italian interests.

**4 October 1936:** Arrived back at Gaeta.

**10-12 March 1937:** Il Duce was aboard *Pola* along with the Duke of the Abruzzi for a colonial cruise to Libya.

**7 June 1937:** *Pola* participated in a naval review honoring Marshal Blomberg, held in the Gulf of Naples.

**5 May 1938:** *Pola* was in the Gulf of Naples to participate in Naval Review H for Adolf Hitler's state visit.

**23 November 1938:** During night operations, *Pola* collided with the destroyer *Lampo*. The cruiser's bow damage is repaired in short order, but *Lampo* will not re-enter service until the following May.

**7 March 1939:** The First Division, including *Pola*, steams from Taranto to intercept Spanish Republican naval vessels. See *Zara history*, page 18.

**7-9 April 1939:** *Pola* provided naval support for the Italian occupation of Albania.

**10 June 1940:** As Italy entered the war, the flag of the Second Squadron passed from *Trieste* to *Pola*. *Pola* left Messina on a minelaying mission with the Third Division north of Favignana, and returned to port the following day.

**12 June 1940:** Returning to sea after refueling at Messina, *Pola* sortied without success in pursuit of a British formation sighted by reconnaissance aircraft, but forwards intelligence to Italian destroyers *Strale* and *Baleno* that contributes to their sinking of submarine *HMS Odin* the following day in the Gulf of Taranto.

**8-9 July 1940:** *Pola* traded salvos with British cruisers

in the Battle of Punta Stilo, while evading aerial and submarine attacks, then retired, first to Augusta, then within hours to Naples, in order to avoid an anticipated British air attack on the Sicilian port, where the destroyer *Leone Pancaldo* was sunk the following day.

**30 July-1 August 1940:** *Pola* joined *Trento*, *Gorizia*, and other warships in escorting a convoy to Libya.

**16 August 1940:** *Pola* conducted live firing exercises at the La Motte rock formation off Naples.

**29 August 1940:** Departed Naples.

**30 August 1940:** Arrived Taranto.

**31 August 1940:** *Pola* joined the abortive sortie against the British Operation Hats.

**7 September-6 October 1940:** During this time, *Pola* undertook no fewer than five fleet exercises, port transfers, convoy escorts, or sorties in search of enemy forces.

**1 November 1940:** Mussolini visited *Pola* at Taranto.

**11-12 November 1940:** The British air raid against the Italian fleet at Taranto found *Pola* moored in Mar Piccolo, avoiding the attention of the attacking aircraft.

**13 November 1940:** Departed for Naples with the First Division the following morning.

**26 November 1940:** During the Battle of Cape Teulada, *Pola* scored direct hits on heavy cruiser *HMS Berwick*, disabling one of that ship's main turrets.

**14-15 December 1940:** At Naples during a night attack by Allied bombers, *Pola* was struck port side, amidships by two bombs. Three boiler compartments were ruptured and flooding was extensive toward the stern, heeling the ship heavily to port.

**16 December 1940:** Entered drydock for repairs.

**7 February 1941:** Bomb damage repair completed.

**11 February 1941:** *Pola* returned to Taranto.

**13 February 1941:** *Pola*, *Zara*, and *Gorizia* on division maneuvers in the Gulf of Taranto.

**11-17 March 1941:** *Pola*, *Zara*, and the newly refitted *Fiume* conducted several days of maneuvers and firing exercises in the Gulf of Taranto.

**23-24 March 1941:** *Pola* conducted an overnight training exercise off Taranto.

**26-27 March 1941:** *Pola*, *Fiume*, and *Zara* set out from

Taranto, in the evening as part of a larger force (Operation Gaudio) which was hunting for British convoys in the vicinity of Crete. See *Trento history*, page 3.

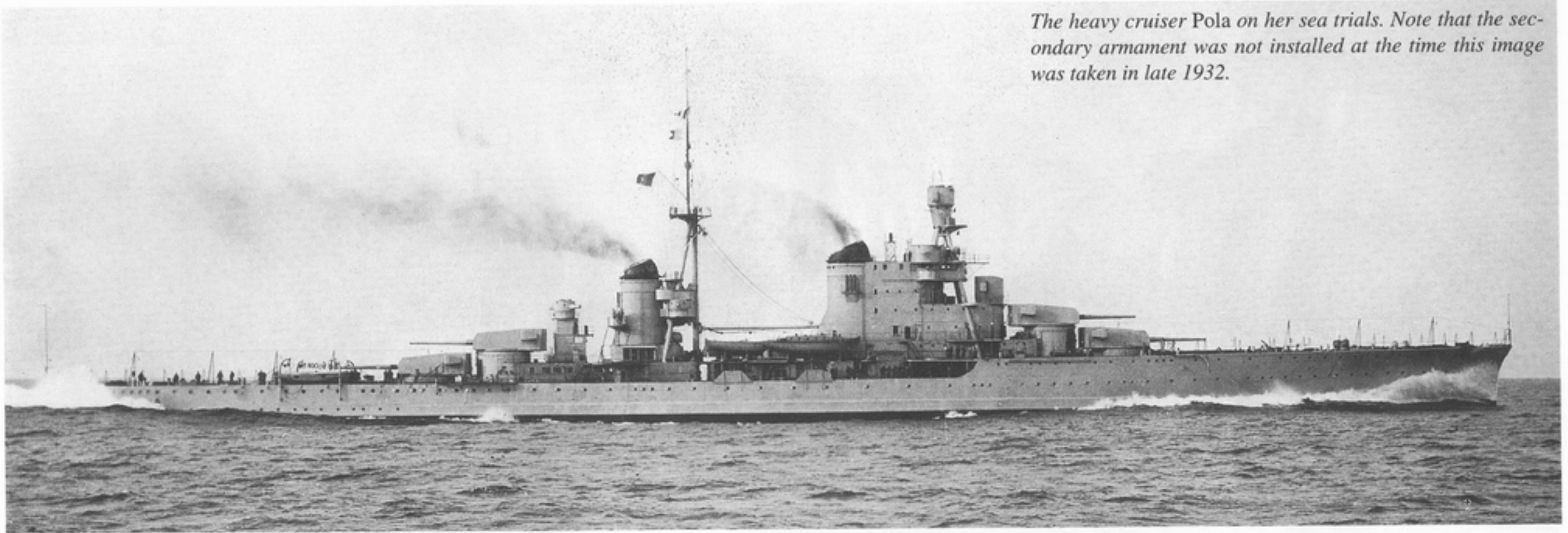
**28 March 1941:** Drawing in around the torpedoed *Vittorio Veneto* with the First and Third Divisions to starboard and port, respectively, *Pola* was in line between *Zara* and *Fiume*, as the force retired toward Taranto in late afternoon, fighting off periodic air attacks into the evening. With darkness falling, a final air strike on the battle group hit *Pola*, torpedoed starboard amidships at 1950 as *Fiume* took evasive action and passed her to starboard, vanishing into the haze. *Pola* lost power and dropped behind the formation, stopped dead in the water, afire and, unable to radio her distress. By the time *Pola* can request a tow at about 2040, the squadron and division commanders aboard *Veneto* and *Zara* have been missing radio messages since 2015 regarding the plight of *Pola*. The result that it was not until 2106 that *Zara*, *Fiume*, and four destroyers were ordered to turn back. Unknown to *Pola*, her position was plotted on radar since 2015 by advance elements of the British Mediterranean Fleet Battle Squadron, and as the British force closed on the eerily still cruiser by 2225 they are perplexed by a Very pistol flare sent up by *Pola*, anticipating the arrival of her sisterships and mistaking the advancing British line for her rescuers, even if they are arriving from a different direction than expected. The three battleships by now have their turrets trained on *Pola* and as they prepare to open fire at 2228 are surprised by the unexpected arrival of the *Zara* group, and quickly turn their searchlights and guns on them, instead.

**29 March 1941:** *Pola* was not targeted by the British battleships during the destruction of her sisters and two destroyers, known as the Battle of Cape Matapan, remaining adrift through the night, her decks thronged with surviving crew. Before her captain can succeed at scuttling the ship, British destroyers close in and pick up survivors before torpedoes from *HMS Jervis* and *HMS Nubian* finally dispatch the wounded *Pola* at 0410.

**18 October 1946:** *Pola* was stricken from the Italian naval register.



*The heavy cruiser Pola on her sea trials. Note that the secondary armament was not installed at the time this image was taken in late 1932.*



*Pola in company with her sistership Zara in the harbor at Venice, Italy, about 1933. Pola still did not have all of her secondary armament installed at that time. Compare the differences in the bridge structures between the two ships. Pola was the only ship in this class built to that configuration.*





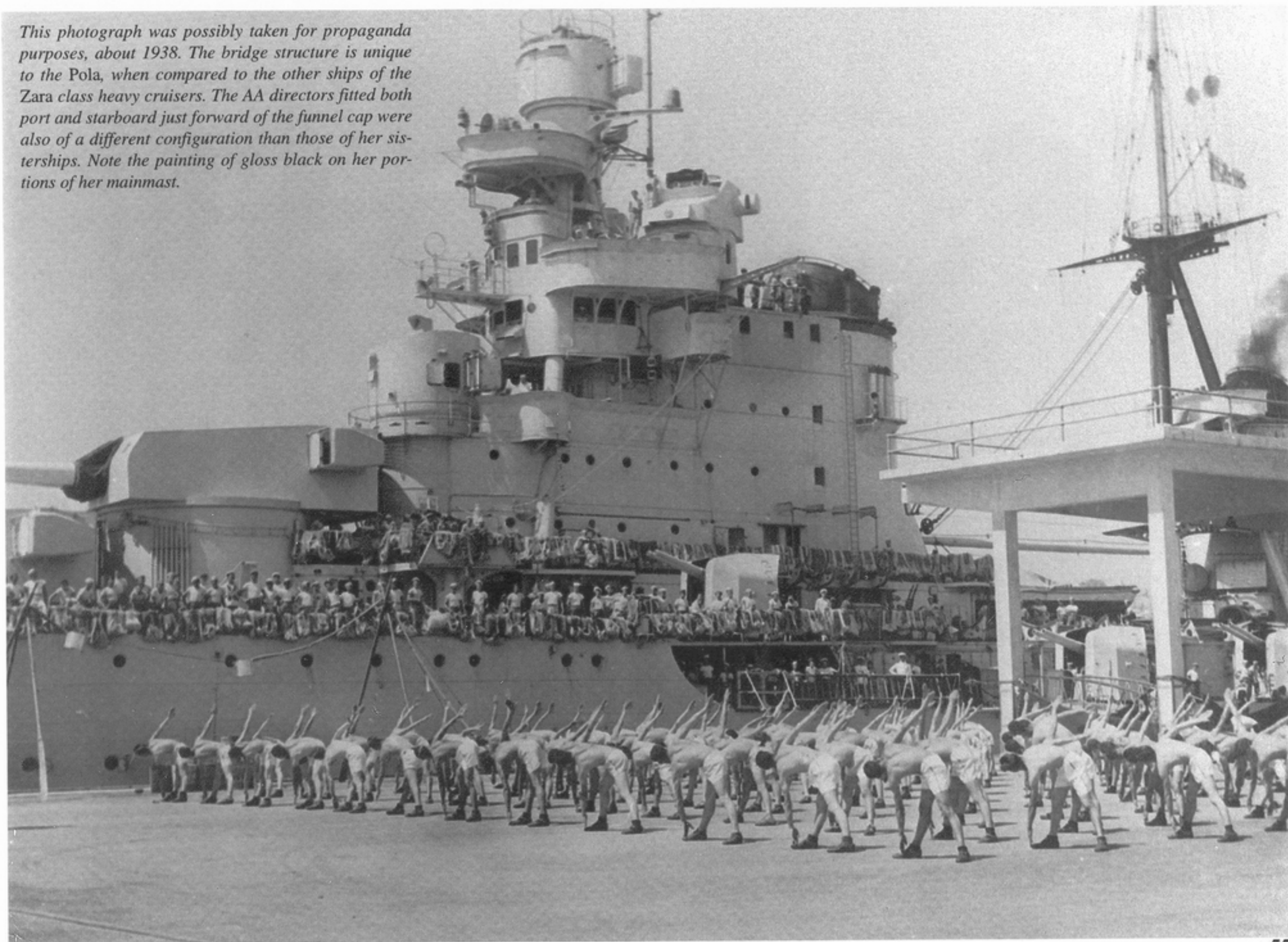


*The two upper photos are of the fore and aft main gun turrets on the Pola. The image to the right is also a good view of the face of the bridge structure.*

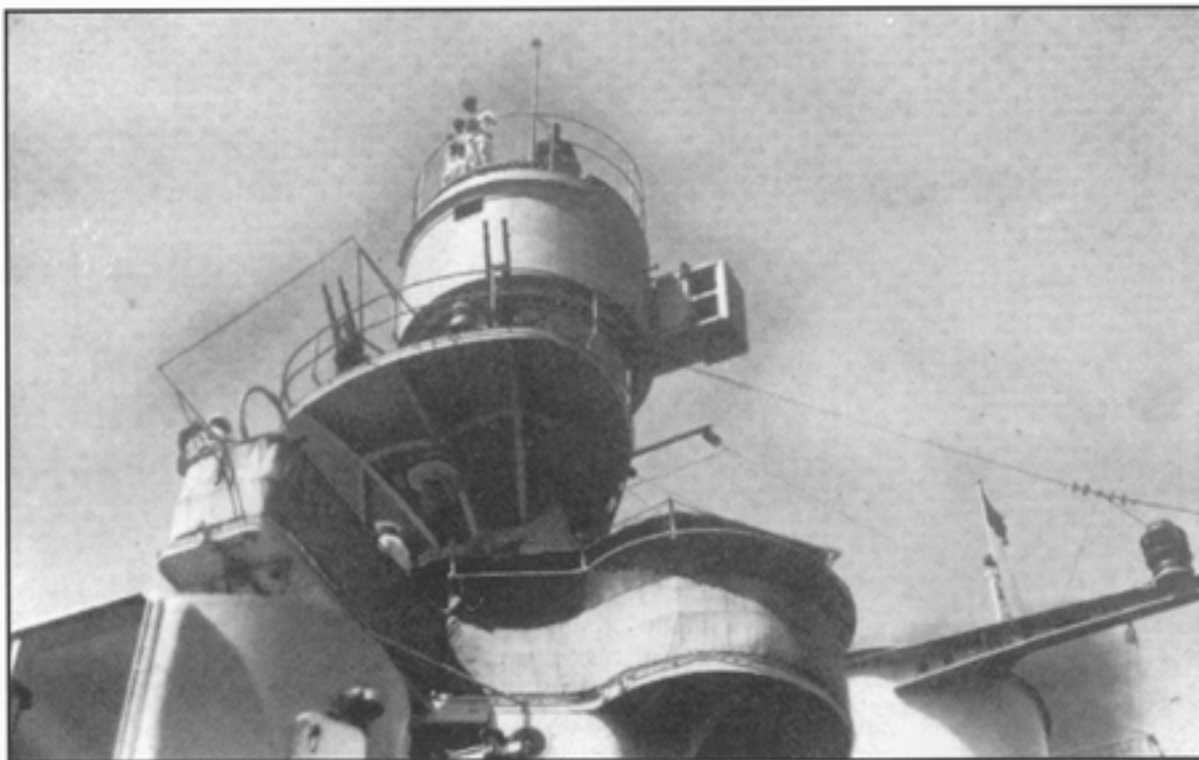
*The photograph below of Pola at anchor in Naples, Italy was taken during 1938, possibly during the naval parade for Adolf Hitler in May of that year. Note the extremely large national ensign flying at the stern.*



*This photograph was possibly taken for propaganda purposes, about 1938. The bridge structure is unique to the Pola, when compared to the other ships of the Zara class heavy cruisers. The AA directors fitted both port and starboard just forward of the funnel cap were also of a different configuration than those of her sisterships. Note the painting of gloss black on her portions of her mainmast.*







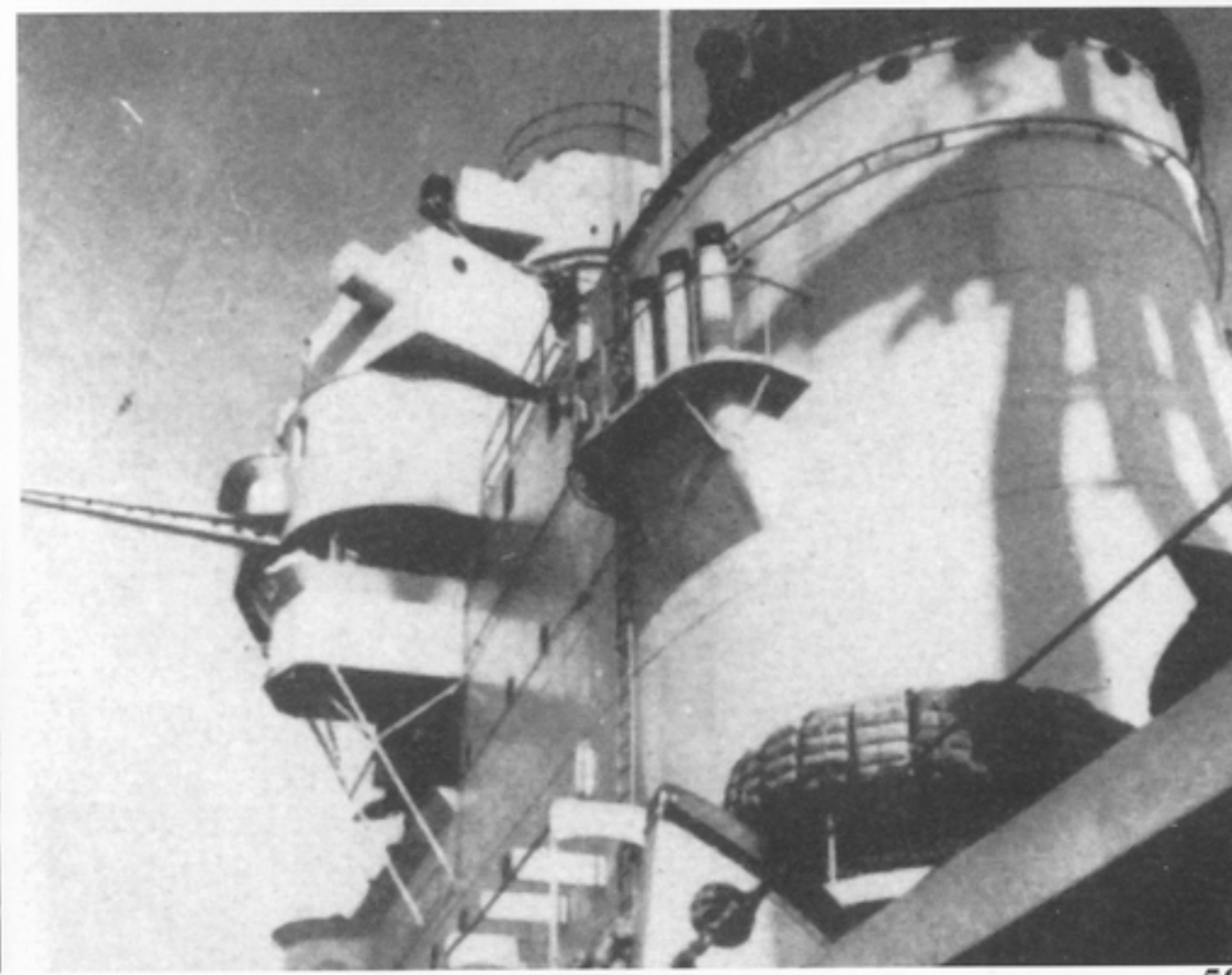
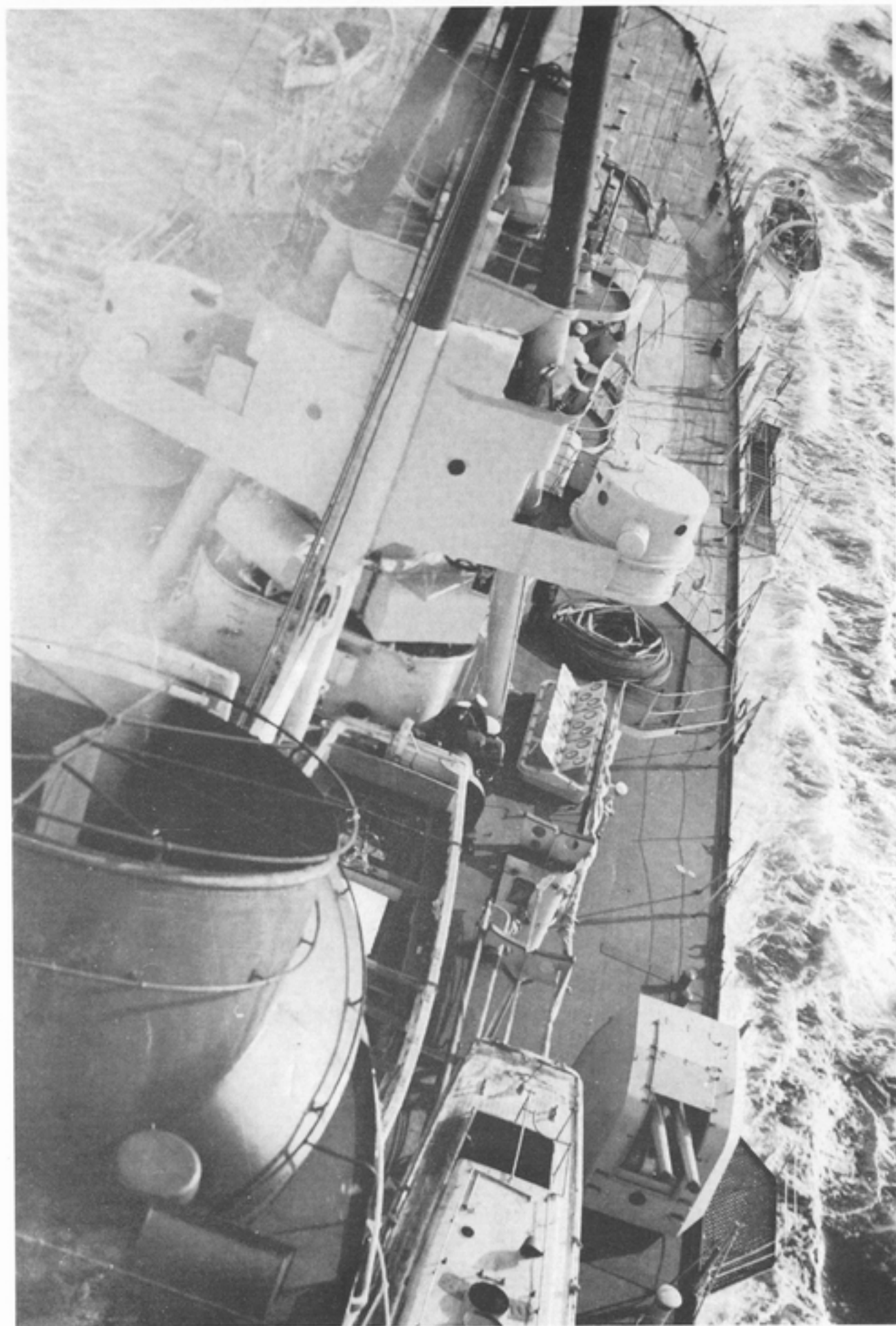
*The smaller photo is a view of the small AA platform just below the foretop director on the Pola, prior to the splinter shield being installed.*

*Below, the Pola is departing port for exercises at sea about 1935. Note that the foredeck was painted in an overall dark gray, as were all other steel decks at that time.*

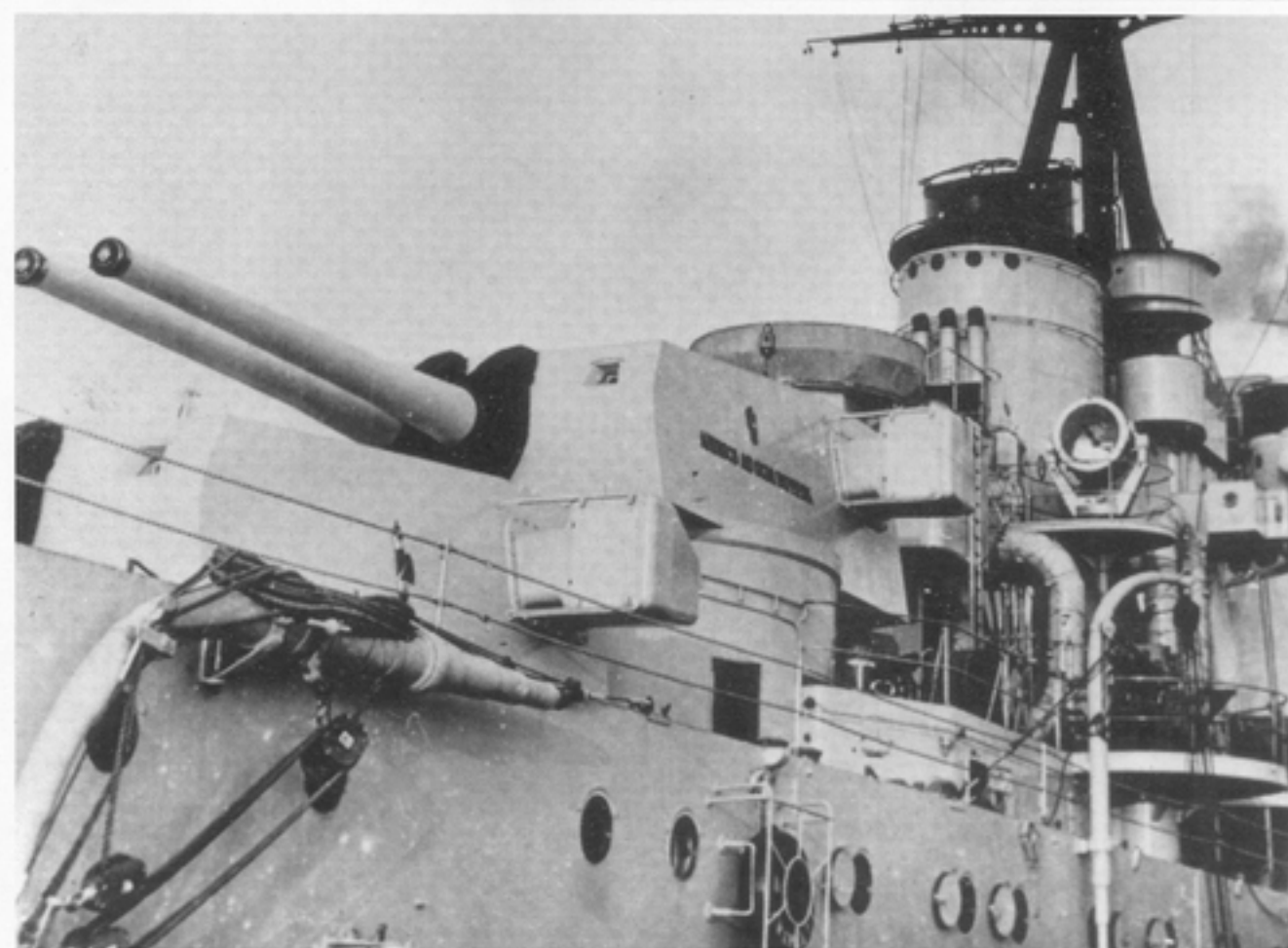
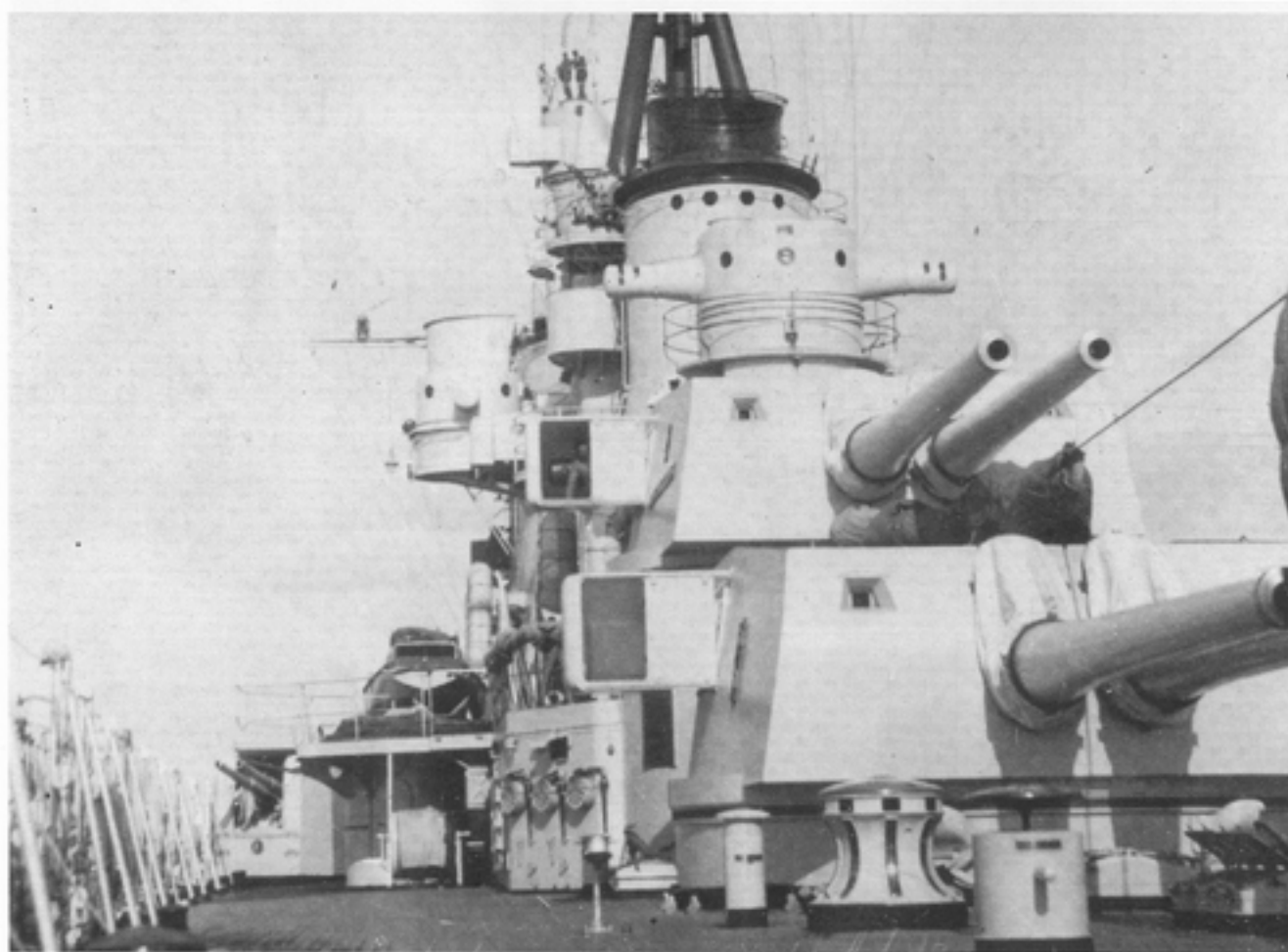
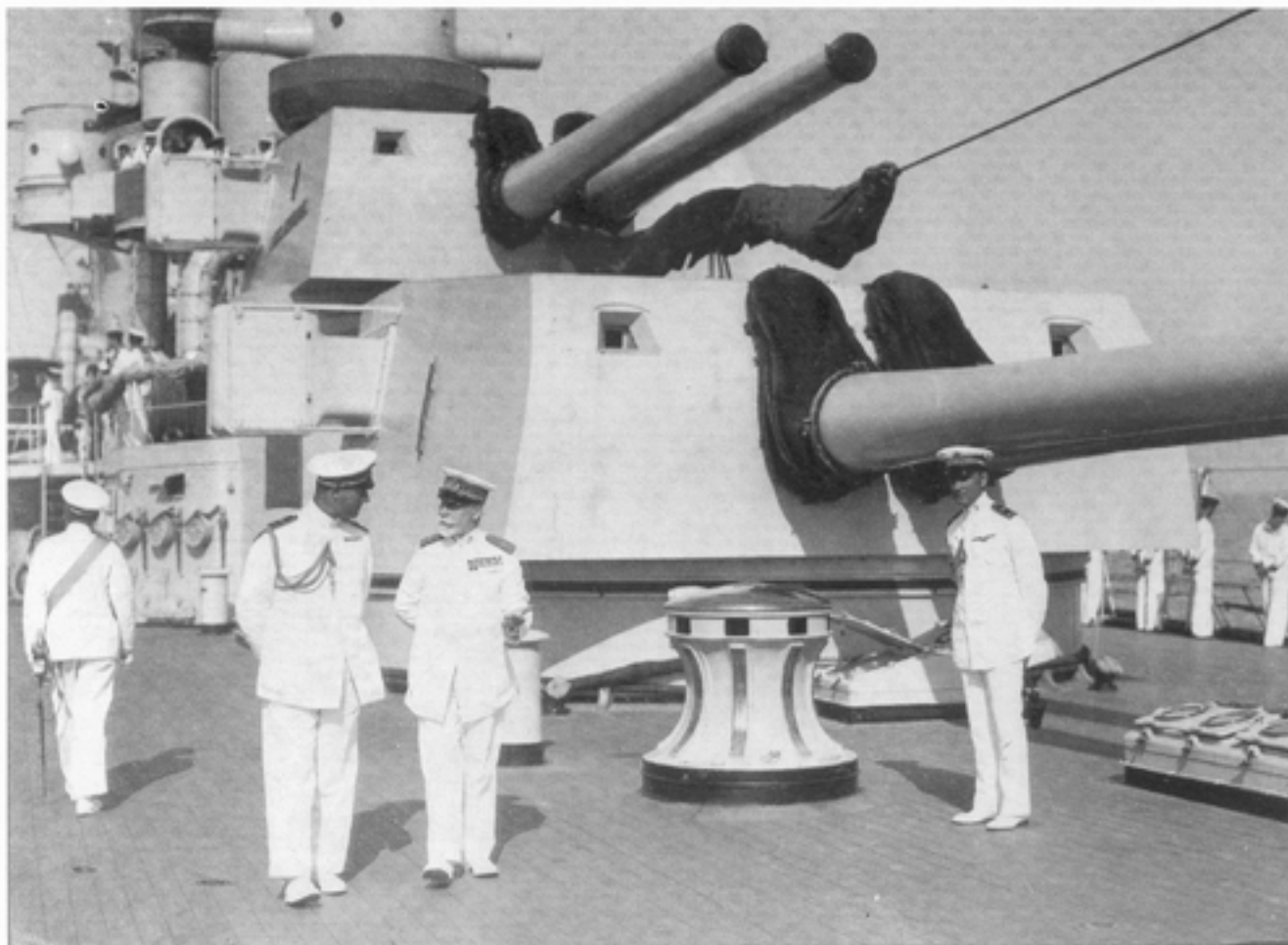


*The photographs on the opposite page are two views looking down onto various decks of the Pola and one looking at the fore funnel and bridge structure, all taken sometime during the late 1930s.*





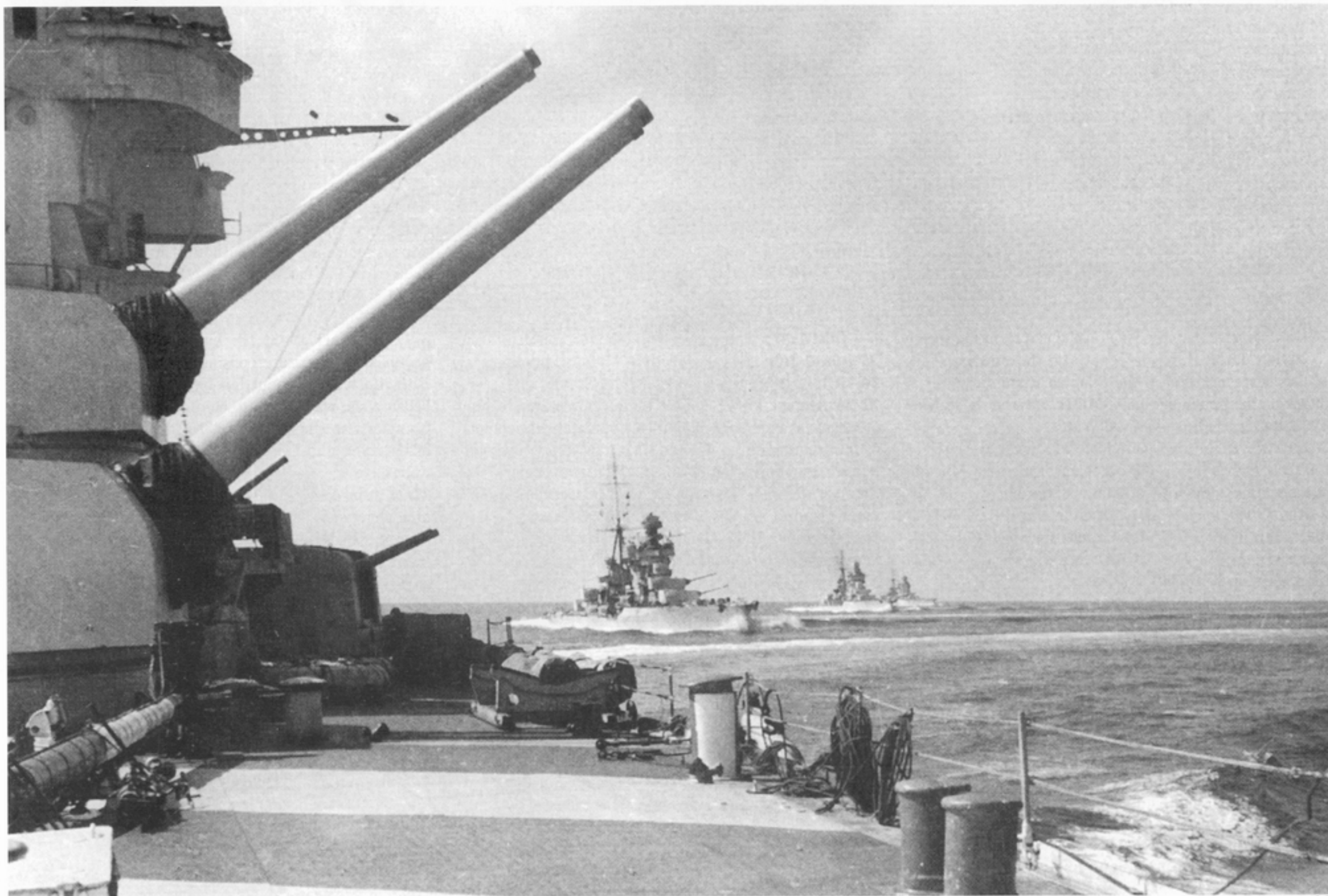






*The four images on the previous page are all of the aft section of the Pola, taken pre-war, or in the early days of Italy's involvement in the Second World War. This area of the ship, and that of her sisterships, was the only area where the deck was covered with wood. This was left in its natural color.*

*Below is a photo taken from the foredeck of the Pola in 1940 on patrol with her sisterships of the Zara class. Note the angled stripes on the deck. These were the standard aircraft recognition stripes used by the Italian Navy.*





# General History of the Italian Royal Navy Heavy Cruiser *Bolzano*

**11 June 1930:** *Bolzano* was laid down at the Cantiere Ansaldo shipyard in Genoa, Italy.

**31 August 1932:** Launched.

**19 August 1933:** Commissioned.

**2 December 1933:** *Bolzano*, *Trento* and *Trieste* form the Second Division of the First Squadron.

**29 June 1934:** The ceremony conferring *Bolzano's* battle flag is held on the Grand Canal in Venice, Italy in the company of *Trento*.

**July 1934:** Second Division became the Third Division.

**27 November 1936:** *Bolzano* took part in the naval review recognizing Hungarian regent Admiral Miklos von Horthy, in the Gulf of Naples.

**10-12 March 1937:** *Bolzano* escorted Il Duce's brief colonial cruise to Libya.

**3 June 1937:** *Bolzano* returned from a mission to the Balearic Islands, having been dispatched from La Spezia to Palma de Mallorca to repatriate the bodies of six Italian seamen killed in the Spanish Republican aerial attack on the Italian auxiliary cruiser *Barletta* on 25 May 1937, during the Spanish Civil War.

**7 June 1937:** *Bolzano* participated in naval exercises in the Gulf of Naples on the occasion of German Marshal Werner von Blomberg's official visit to Italy.

**5 May 1938:** *Bolzano* participated in Naval Review H in the Gulf of Naples for Adolf Hitler's state visit to Italy.

**January 1939:** Mussolini visited *Bolzano* at La Maddalena in Sardinia.

**17 May 1939:** *Bolzano* participated in a naval review for King Paul of Yugoslavia in the Gulf of Naples.

**5-19 June 1939:** *Bolzano* took part in the inaugural Navy Day festivities at Livorno.

**8-9 July 1940:** *Bolzano*, leading both Italian heavy cruiser divisions at the Battle of Punta Stilo in attacking a line of British cruisers, was hit by a salvo at 1605. Her No. 2 turret was hit and her rudder was jammed, causing the ship to slew into a tight turn to port while she maintained firing. Following the battle she was mistakenly attacked by Italian warplanes, but not damaged further.

**12 July 1940:** *Bolzano* arrived at La Spezia for repairs.

**11-12 November 1940:** *Bolzano*, at anchor in Taranto's

Mar Piccolo, was not damaged during the British surprise air attack that sank three Italian battleships.

**26-28 November 1940:** *Bolzano* was involved in reconnaissance in the run-up to the Battle of Cape Teulada, and engaged the British battlecruiser *HMS Renown* without results. During this, *Bolzano* and *Trento* were in such close quarters that they impeded each other's targeting.

**28-29 March 1941:** British aircraft attempted unsuccessfully to torpedo *Bolzano* off Gavdhos while the Third Division traded fire with British cruisers. *Bolzano* was part of Operation Gaudio, which had as its outcome the destruction of the First Division cruisers off Cape Matapan during that night. See *Pola history*, page 54.

**24-30 April 1941:** Fast convoy duty to Tripoli.

See *Trieste history*, page 10 for all fast convoy duty.

**24-27 May 1941:** Fast convoy duty to Tripoli.

**8-9 June 1941:** "Esperia" convoy duty to Tripoli.

**25 June-1 July 1941:** Fast convoy duty to Tripoli.

**16-20 July 1941:** Fast convoy duty to Tripoli.

**22-26 August 1941:** During Italian operations to hunt down naval elements of British Operation Mincemeat, *Bolzano*, bringing up the rear of the formation, was torpedoed by submarine *HMS Triumph* just north of the Strait of Messina. Two tugs assist her back to Messina, requiring three months of repairs.

**8-9 November 1941:** "Duisburg" convoy duty.

See *Trieste history*, page 11.

**17 July 1942:** Italy's Crown Prince Umberto visited *Bolzano* at Messina.

**12 August 1942:** Mid-August operations. Third Division, now *Trieste*, *Gorizia* and *Bolzano*, set out from Messina, escorted by destroyers *Aviere*, *Geniere*, *Camicia Nera*, *Legionario*, *Ascari*, *Corsaro*, and *Grecale*, in action against the British Navy.

**13 August 1942:** The cruisers *Bolzano* and *Attendolo* were hit by torpedoes from the submarine *HMS Unbroken* at 0805 and 0806. *Attendolo* limped back to Messina, but by 1330 it was necessary to beach the sinking *Bolzano* on the nearby island of Panarea, where she was towed by destroyer *Camicia Nera* and two tugs from Messina. The rest of the Italian force returned to base at

Messina the next day.

**15 September 1942:** *Bolzano* was finally shored up sufficiently to be towed from Panarea to Naples for drydock inspection of her structural damage.

**October 1942:** *Bolzano* was made seaworthy enough to be towed north to the naval arsenal at La Spezia to await further repairs.

**Late 1942-Early 1943:** While *Bolzano* languished at La Spezia, she was not forgotten. Because of the heavy damage to her superstructure, and the manifest need of the Italian Navy to carry a useful number of aircraft to sea, a plan developed to convert *Bolzano* into a hybrid aircraft-launching fast transport. These plans were soon shelved in the face of the navy's more immediate and pressing war needs, and any repair work on *Bolzano* was subject to the availability of facilities and material.

**8-9 September 1943:** The La Spezia naval arsenal was occupied by German troops as a result of the Armistice. *Bolzano* was not scuttled by her Italian caretakers because she was judged to be of no material value to the occupiers, so she was abandoned in the basin, partially afloat. She and *Gorizia* were plundered by German troops.

**21-22 June 1944:** British and co-belligerent Italian frogmen penetrated the harbor of La Spezia on manned torpedoes (Chariots), intending to sink *Bolzano* and *Gorizia* before the Germans can use them as blockships at the port entrances. They successfully mine and sink *Bolzano* and several Italian submarines, but are prevented from completing the job on *Gorizia*.

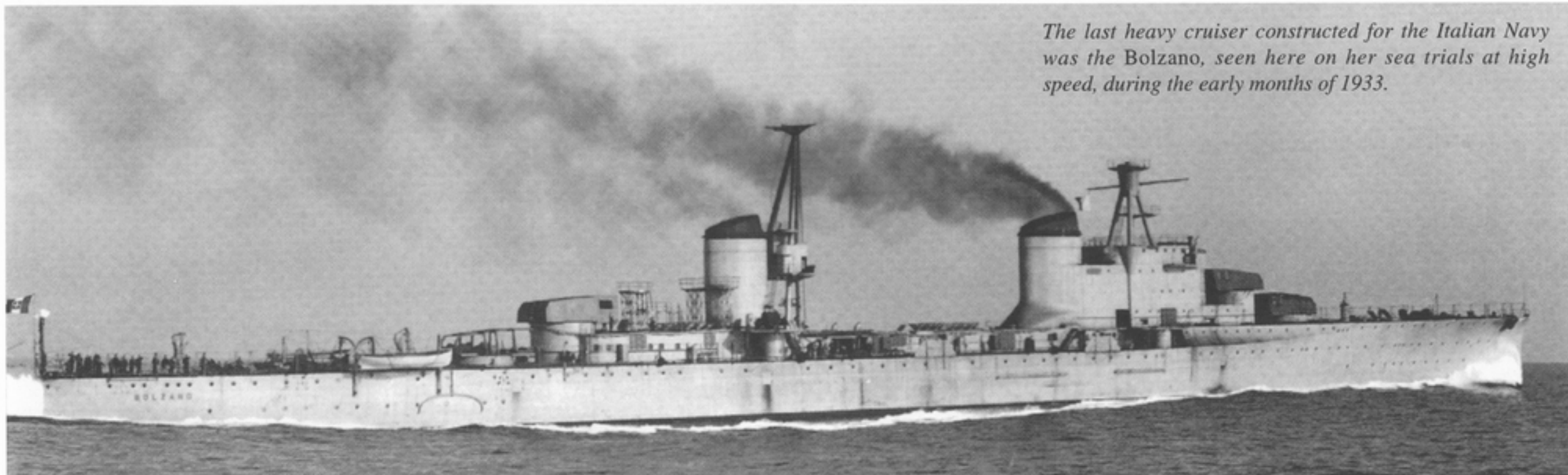
**April 1945:** Allied forces entering the La Spezia naval arsenal encounter the sunken *Bolzano* and the derelict *Gorizia*.

**27 February 1947:** *Bolzano* was stricken from the Italian naval register.

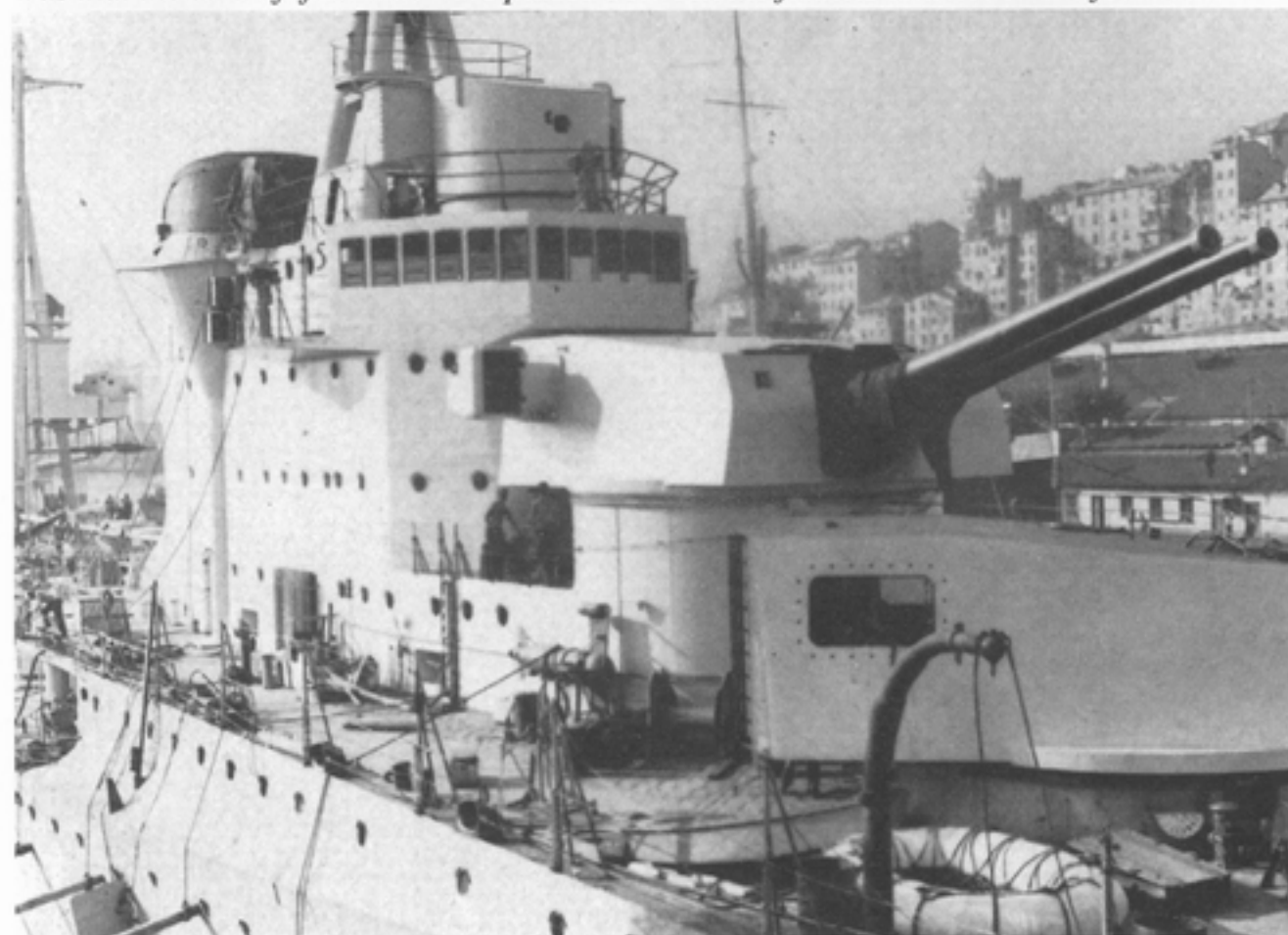
**September 1949:** The wreck of the capsized, sunken *Bolzano* was finally refloated at La Spezia, and the hulk towed out of the basin for scrapping.



*The last heavy cruiser constructed for the Italian Navy was the Bolzano, seen here on her sea trials at high speed, during the early months of 1933.*



*The image below is of Bolzano during the fitting out phase of her construction. The basic hull design for this ship was very similar to that of the Trento class heavy cruisers, while her superstructure and turret design was similar to that of the Pola. The one major difference was that the aircraft facilities were placed between the funnels and not on the foredeck.*



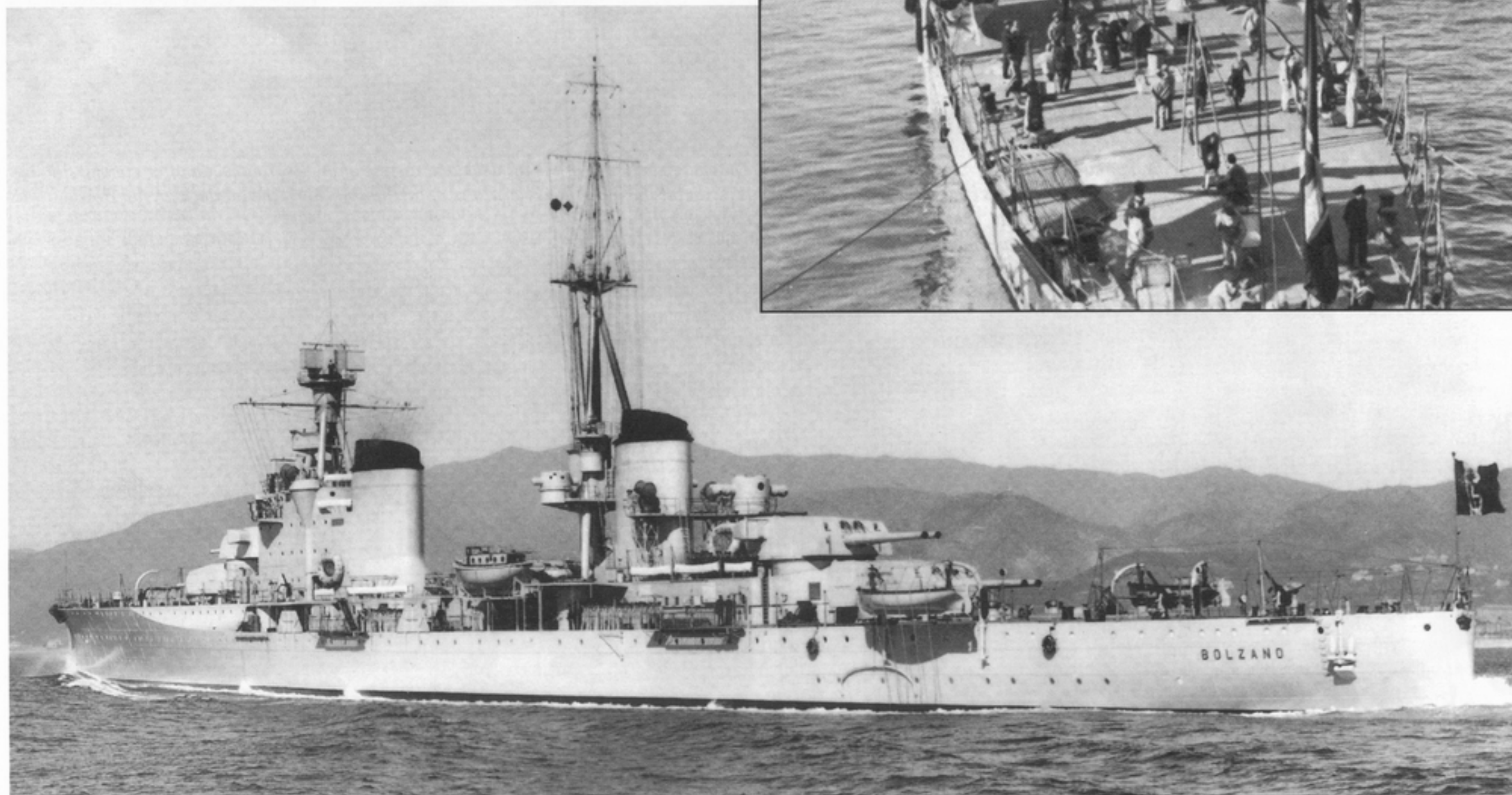
*The image below is of the aft deck and turrets of the Bolzano soon after commissioning. As with all the other heavy cruisers of the Italian Navy, the aft deck on the Bolzano was covered with wood.*



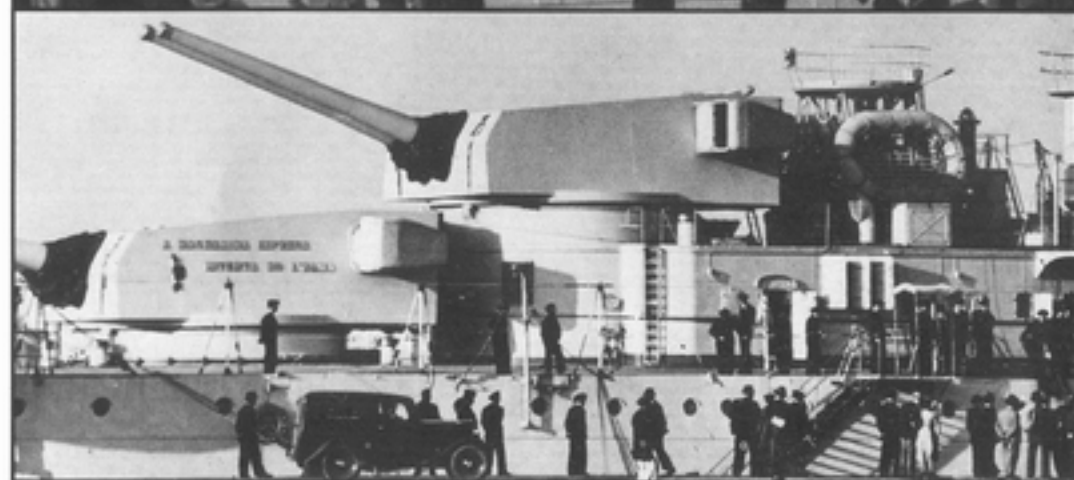
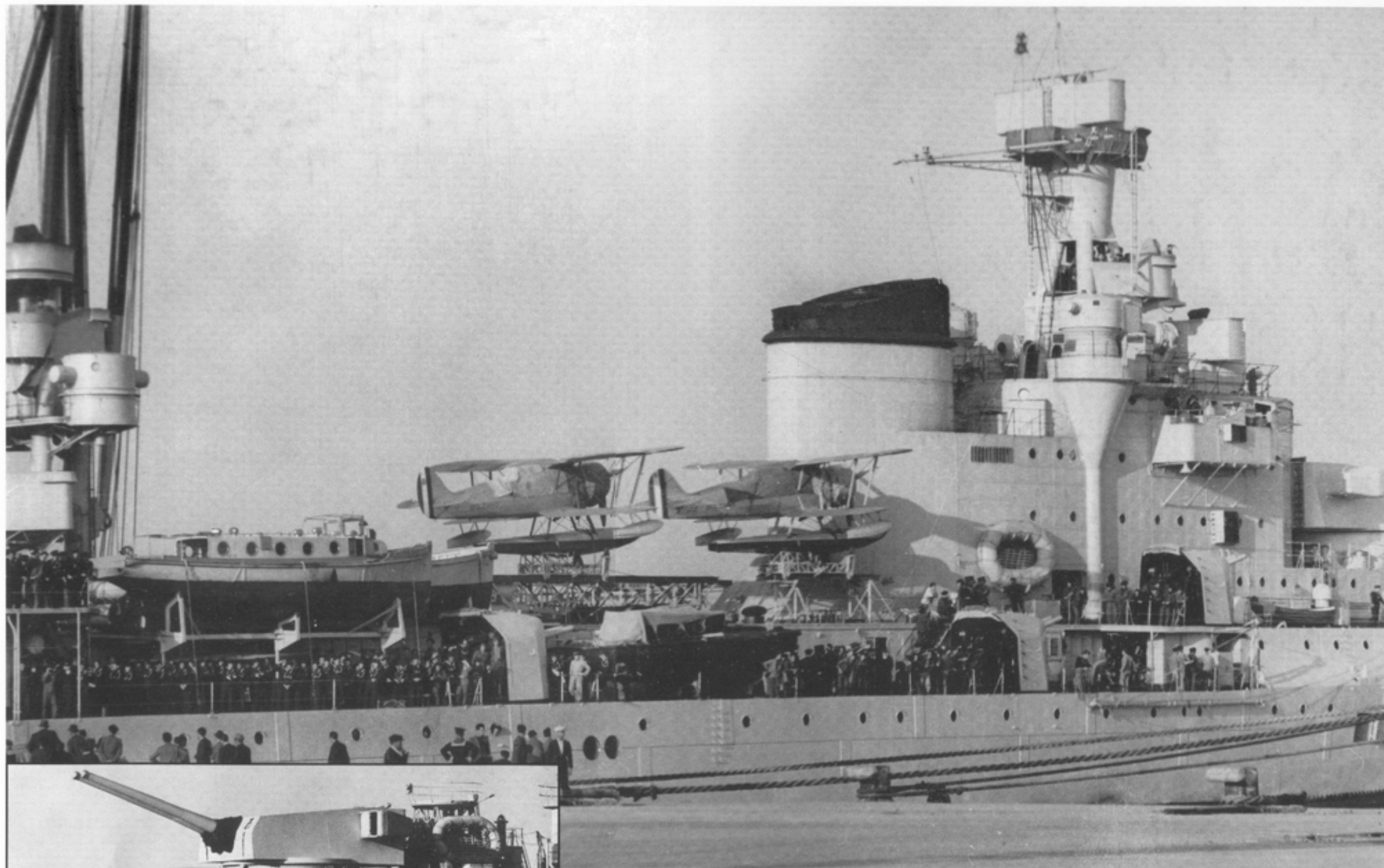


*The photograph to the right is of the aft deck of the Bolzano, taken soon after commissioning.*

*The image below of the Bolzano was also taken soon after commissioning in August 1933. The bridge design, similar to that of the Pola, can be seen here where the forward funnel was incorporated into the bridge structure. The tall mainmast was designed to improve radio reception and transmission. The extreme height allowed greater radio range, limited by the earth's curvature and the low power of radios at that time. Bolzano was painted in the standard navy gray at that time.*

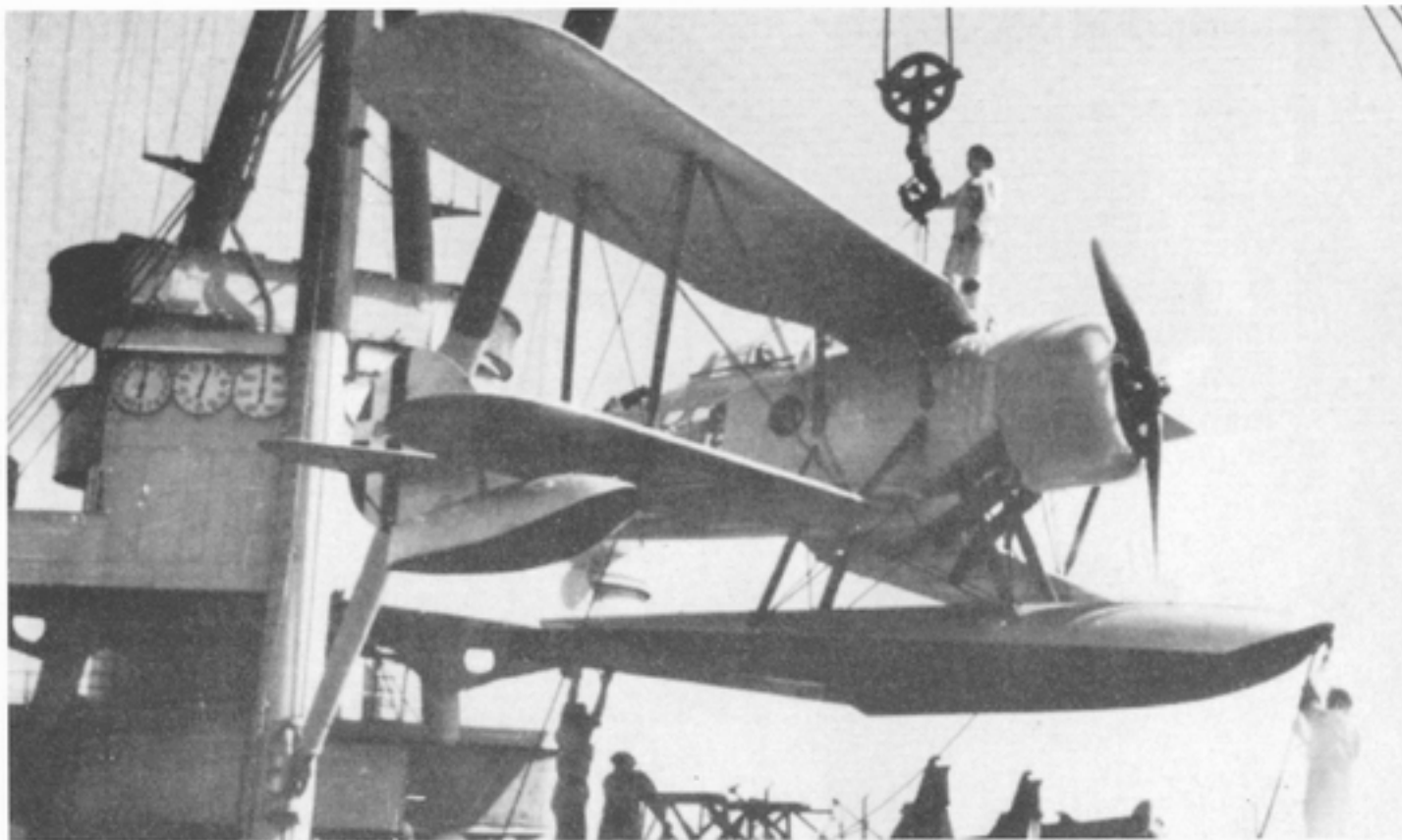




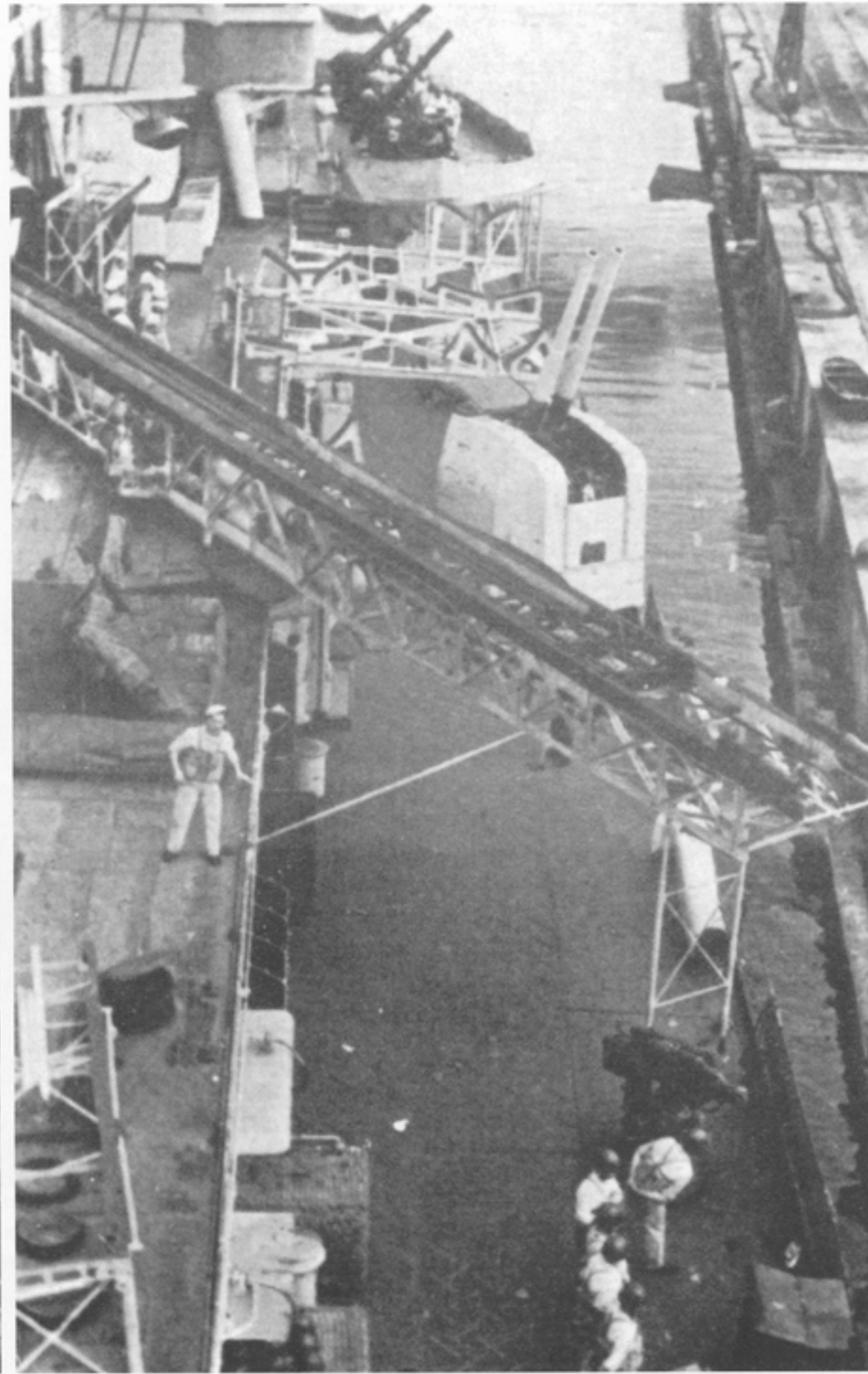
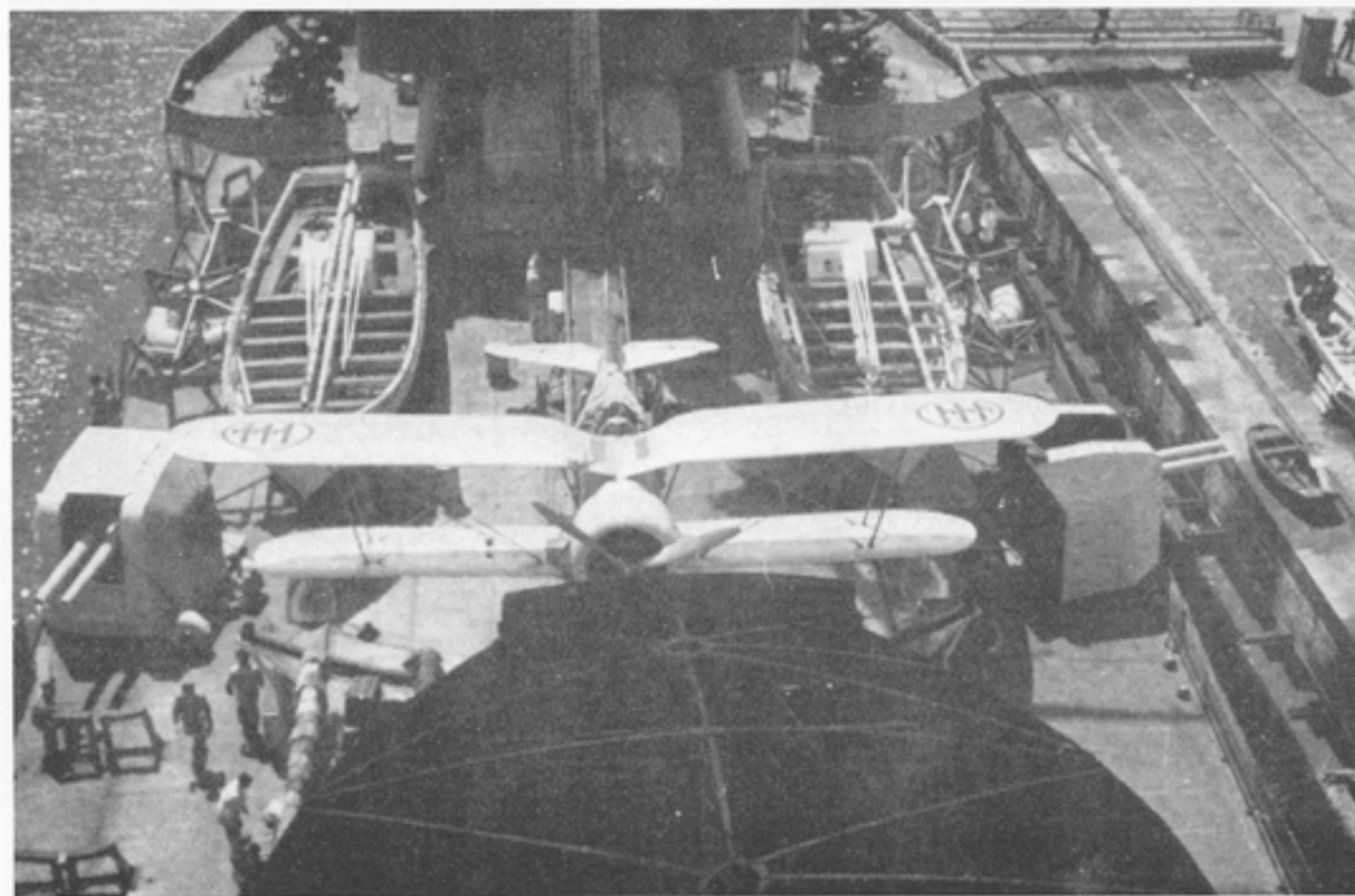


*The photo to the left is of the aft turrets on the Bolzano, taken at the same time as the main image on this page, sometime during the mid 1930s, possibly about the time of commissioning. The aircraft catapult fitted amidships on Bolzano can be seen here in this image, with two Ro-43 floatplanes stowed aboard. This photograph is also a good view of the forward superstructure and fore funnel. All of the main and AA directors fitted aboard this heavy cruiser were of a new, or modified design, compared to those on all the other heavy cruisers.*



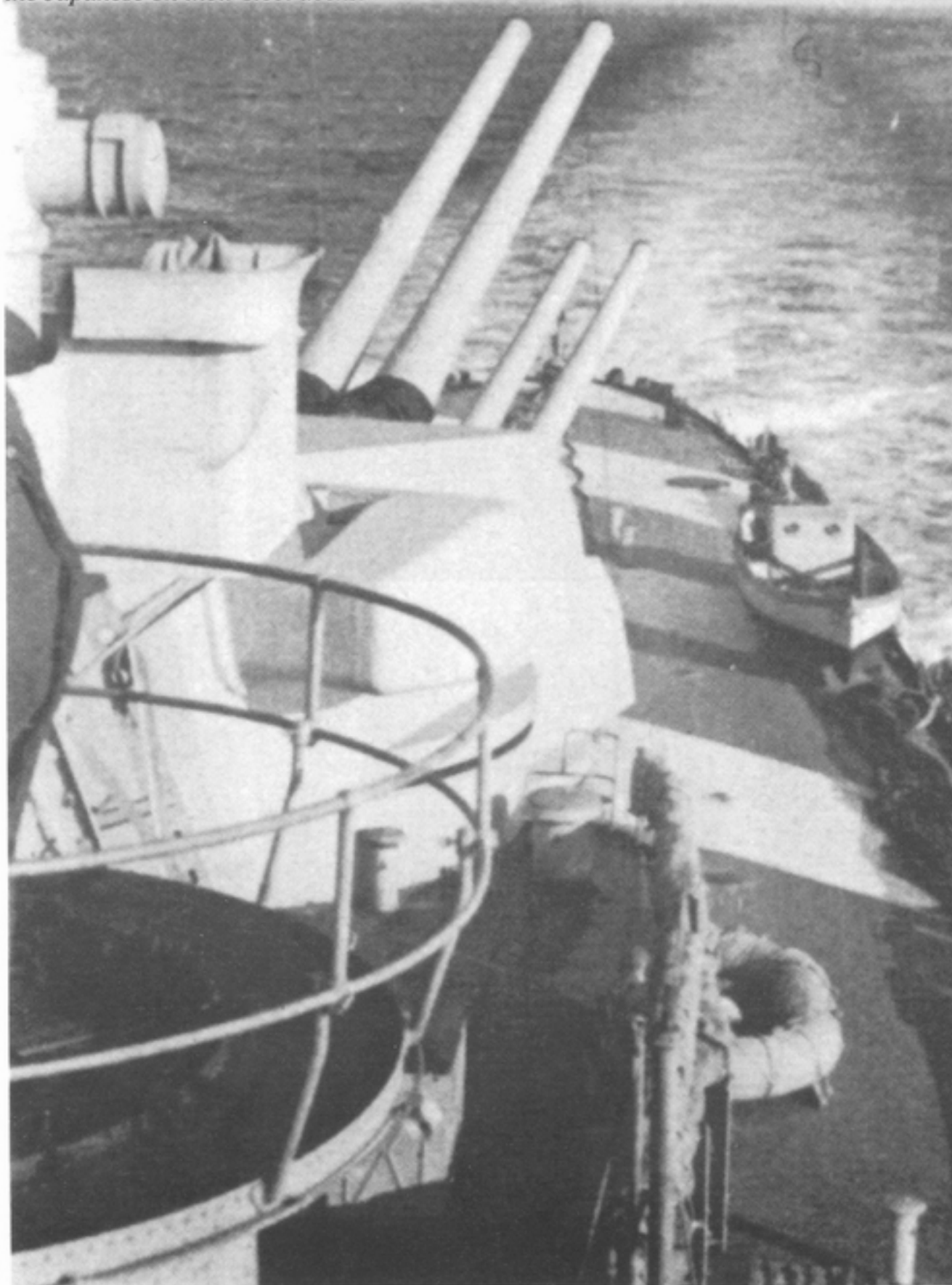


*All of the images on this page are of the aircraft, their handling and launching facilities. Above, an Ro-43 is hoisted aboard and placed atop the catapult, seen in the image below. The image to the right illustrated how the catapult was swung to either port, or starboard to launch the floatplanes.*





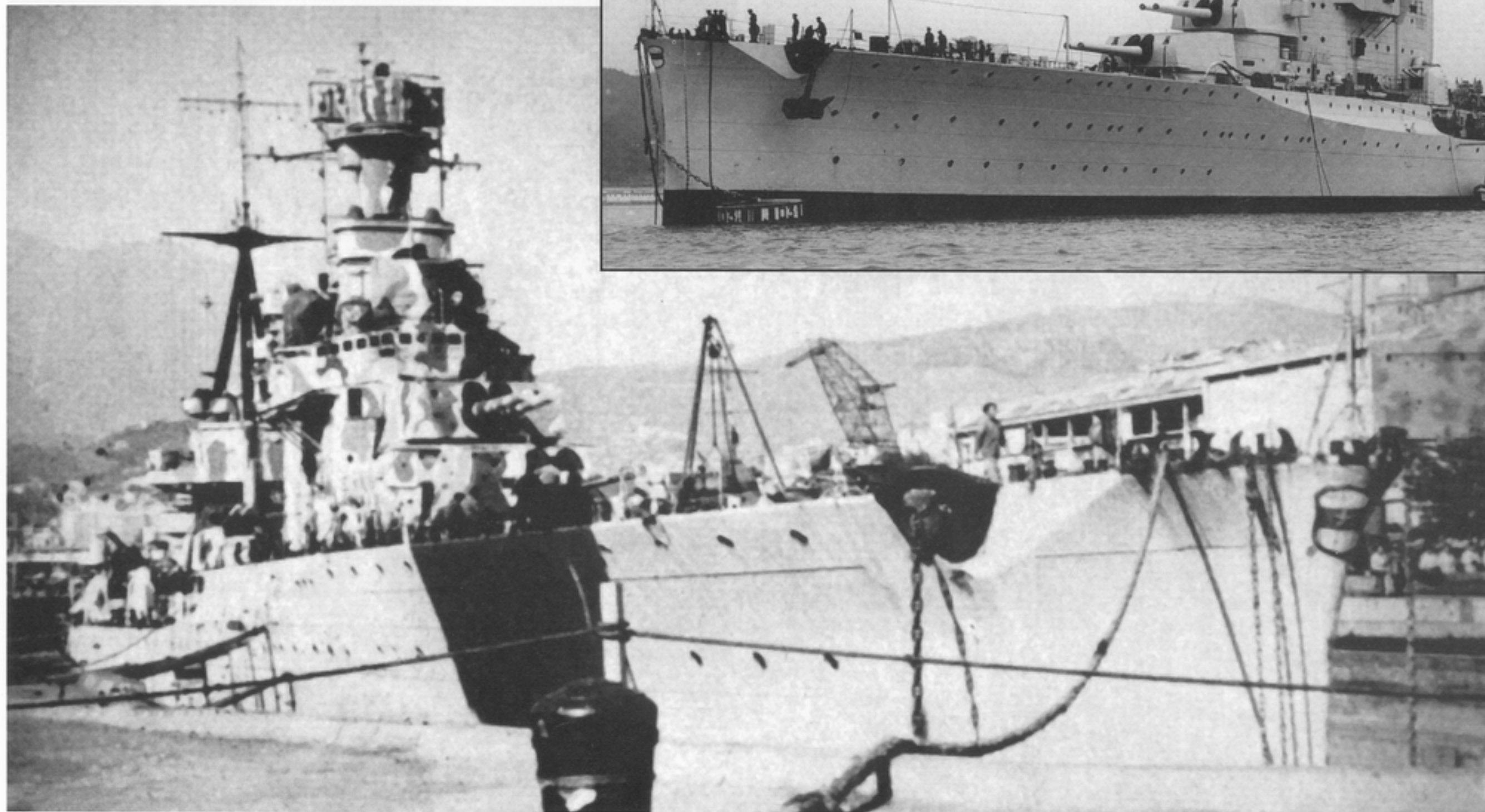
*Both of the images on this page of Bolzano were taken during the war showing the recognition stripes on the bow, right, and the unique application on the aft deck, below. Note the anti-skid treadplate on the foredeck, which was similar to that used by the Japanese on their steel decks.*



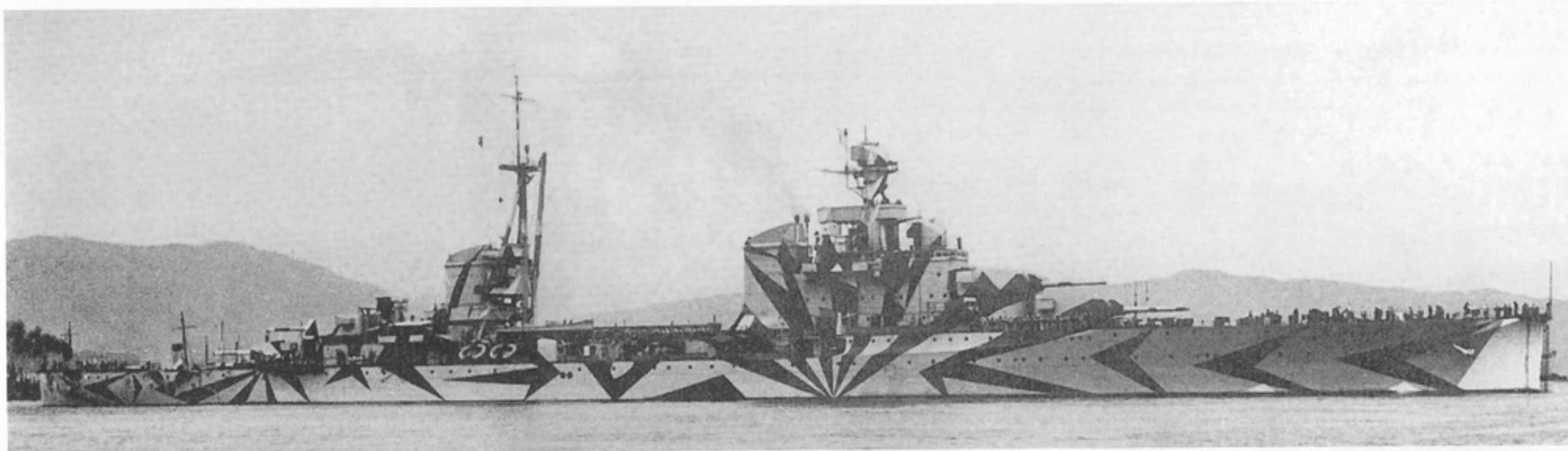


*The photograph to the right is of the Bolzano on March 10, 1938.*

*The lower image is of the Bolzano, taken in Genova during 1942, with a rather strange camouflage pattern applied to both her hull and superstructure. This was possibly to camouflage the ship while in port while under frequent air attacks. This would have been about the time of the completion of the repairs needed for the damage she received from the torpedo hit from HMS Triumph in August 1941. Note that the changes to her superstructure were minor from the configuration shown in the earlier photo above.*







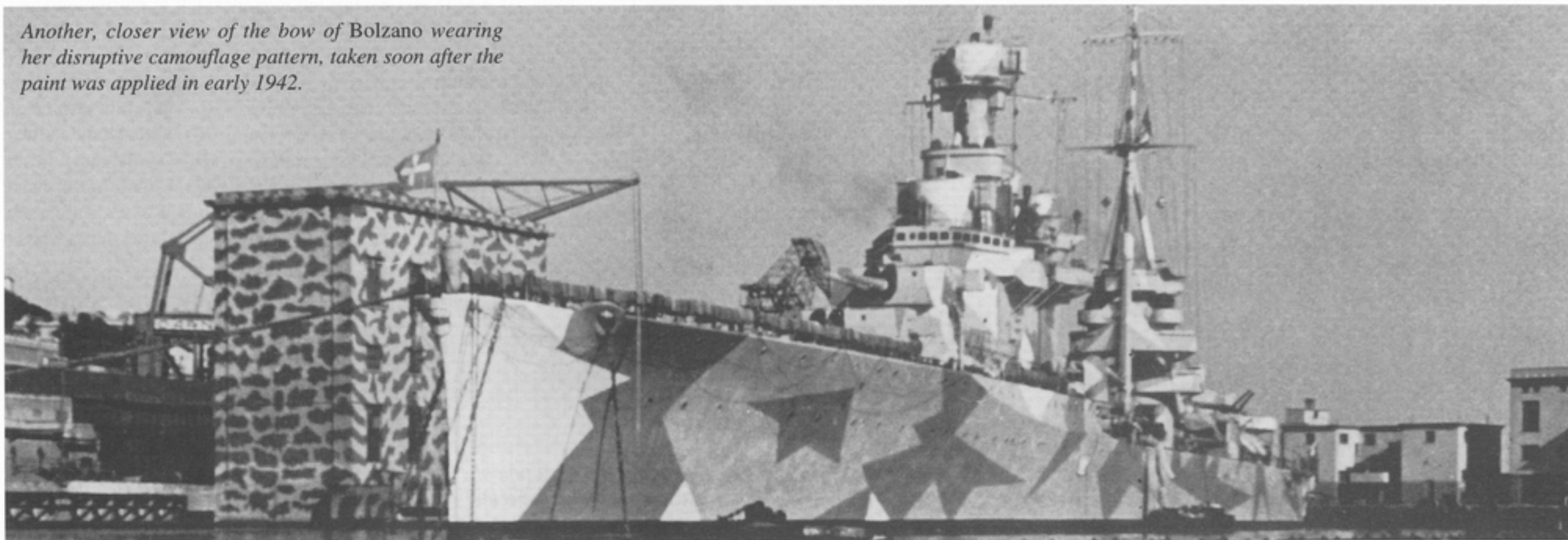
*The two photographs on this page were taken at La Spezia in June 1942, just after Bolzano had one of the wildest camouflage patterns ever applied to any warship. As one can see from the two images, the pattern was asymmetrical. The colors were white, light gray and dark gray. This pattern was not designed to hide the ship, but to confuse*

*any surface observer, most notably British Royal Navy submarines, which had become a major factor in the life expectancy of the Royal Italian Navy warships. The pattern's intent was to cause difficulties in determining course, speed, and type of ship.*

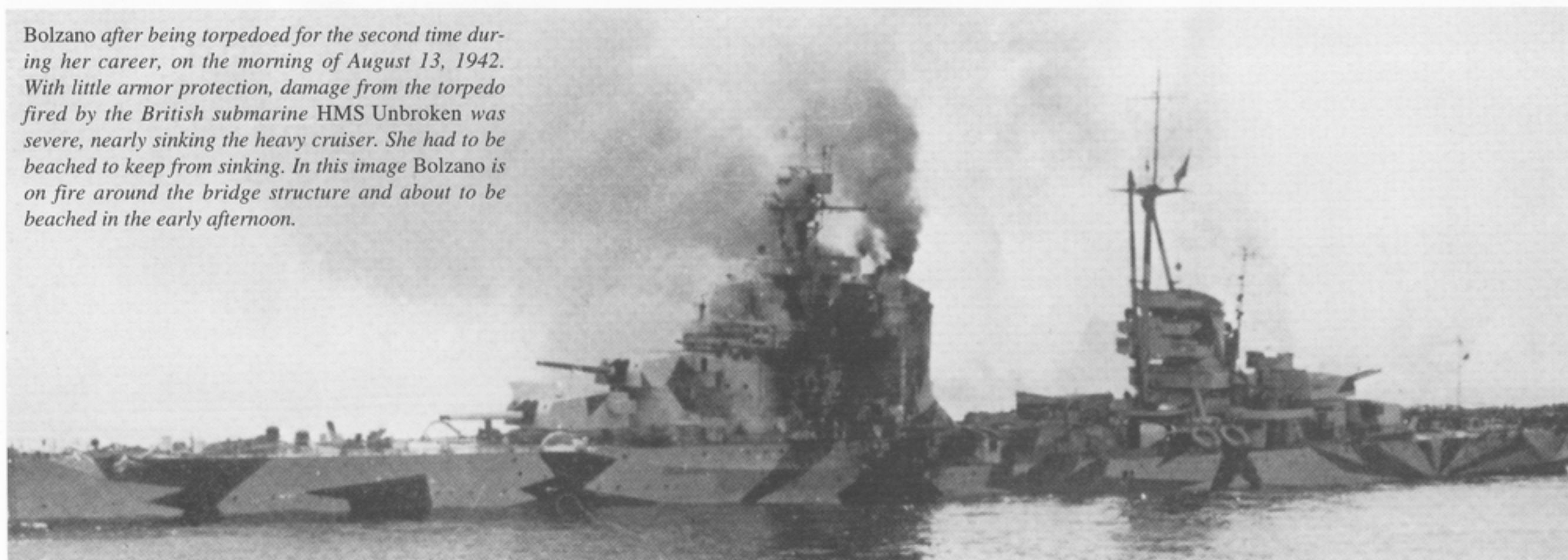




*Another, closer view of the bow of Bolzano wearing her disruptive camouflage pattern, taken soon after the paint was applied in early 1942.*



*Bolzano after being torpedoed for the second time during her career, on the morning of August 13, 1942. With little armor protection, damage from the torpedo fired by the British submarine HMS Unbroken was severe, nearly sinking the heavy cruiser. She had to be beached to keep from sinking. In this image Bolzano is on fire around the bridge structure and about to be beached in the early afternoon.*





# General Specifications of Italian Heavy Cruisers

## Trento Class

Displacement: 10,344 tons light, 13,334 tons full load.  
 Dimensions: 646 ft.-2 in. overall length, 67 ft.-6 in. beam, 22 ft.-4 in. draft.  
 Machinery: 12 Yarrow boilers, Parsons geared turbines, 4 shafts.  
 Performance: 35 kts. @ 150,000 shp., maximum sea speed 31 kts.  
 Fuel Capacity: 2,214 tons, 4,160 nm @ 16 kts.  
 Armor: Belt 70mm, bulkheads 40-60mm, decks 20-50mm, barbettes 60-70mm, turrets 100mm, conning tower 40-100mm.  
 Armament: Main: 8 x 203mm(8 in.)/50 cal. Mod. 1924 (4 x 2).  
 Secondary: 16 x 100mm/47 cal. Mod. 1931 (8 x 2).  
 Light AA: 4 x 40mm/39 cal. (4 x 1), 4 x 12.7mm MG (4 x 1).  
 Torpedo Tubes: 4 x 533mm (2 x P & S) fixed tubes amidships.  
 Aircraft: 3 x Piaggio P6 as built.  
 Complement: 723 as built, 781 war time.

## Zara Class

Displacement: 11,680 tons light, 14,330 tons full load.  
 Dimensions: 557 ft.-2 in. overall length, 62 ft.-10 in. beam, 21 ft.-11 in. draft.  
 Machinery: 8 Thornycroft boilers, Parsons geared turbines, 2 shafts.  
 Performance: 32 kts. @ 95,000 shp., maximum sea speed 29 kts.  
 Fuel Capacity: 2,400 tons, 4,800 nm @ 16 kts.  
 Armor: Belt 100-150mm, bulkheads 90-120mm, decks 20-70mm, barbettes 120-150mm, turrets 120-150mm, conning tower 70-150mm.  
 Armament: Main: 8 x 203mm(8 in.)/50 cal. Mod. 1929 (4 x 2).  
 Secondary: 16 x 100mm/47 cal. Mod. 1931 (8 x 2).  
 Light AA: 4 x 40mm/39 cal. (4 x 1), 8 x 13.2mm MG (4 x 2).  
 Aircraft: 2 x Piaggio P6 as built.  
 Complement: 841 as built, 909 war time.

## Bolzano

Displacement: 10,890 tons light, 13,665 tons full load.  
 Dimensions: 646 ft. overall length, 67 ft.-7 in. beam, 17 ft.-4 in. draft.  
 Machinery: 10 Yarrow-Ansaldo boilers, Parsons geared turbines, 4 shafts.  
 Performance: 35 kts. @ 150,000 shp., maximum sea speed 31 kts.  
 Fuel Capacity: 2,224 tons, 4,432 nm @ 16 kts.  
 Armor: Belt 70mm, bulkheads 50-60mm, decks 20-50mm, barbettes 60-70mm, turrets 100mm, conning tower 40-100mm.  
 Armament: Main: 8 x 203mm(8 in.)/50 cal. Mod. 1929 (4 x 2).  
 Secondary: 16 x 100mm/47 cal. Mod. 1931 (8 x 2).  
 Light AA: 4 x 40mm/39 cal., 8 x 13.2mm MG (4 x 2).  
 Aircraft: 3 x Piaggio P6 as built.  
 Complement: 725 as built, 783 war time.

## Armament Modifications

<b>Trento:</b>	1937	Aft 100mm twin AA (P & S) removed. All 40mm and 12.7mm AA removed. 8 x 37mm/54 cal. AA (4 x 2) fitted. 8 x 13.2mm MG (4 x 2) fitted.
	1942	4 x 20mm/65 cal. single MG (4 x 1) fitted.
<b>Trieste:</b>	1937	Aft 100mm twin AA (P & S) removed. All 40mm and 12.7mm AA removed. 8 x 37mm/54 cal. AA (4 x 2) fitted. 8 x 13.2mm MG (4 x 2) fitted.
	1942	All 13.2 mm twin MG removed. 8 x 20mm/65 cal. MG (8 x 1) fitted.
<b>Zara Class:</b>	1937	Aft 100mm twin AA (P & S) removed. All 40mm and 12.7mm AA removed. 8 x 37mm/54 cal. AA (4 x 2) fitted. 8 x 13.2mm MG (4 x 2) fitted.
<b>Gorizia:</b>	1943	All 13.2mm twin MG removed. 14 x 20mm/65 cal. MG (6 x 2 + 2 x 1) fitted.
<b>Bolzano:</b>	1937	Aft 100mm twin AA mounts (P & S) removed. All 40mm and 12.7mm AA removed. 8 x 37mm/54 cal. AA (4 x 2) fitted. 8 x 13.2mm MG (4 x 2) fitted.
	1942	All 13.2 mm twin MG removed. 4 x 20mm/65 cal. MG (4 x 1) fitted.

## Aircraft Complement

Initial aircraft carried aboard all Italian heavy cruisers was the Piaggio P6 sea-plane, beginning in the late 1920s with the completion of the *Trento* class. This type was soon replaced in the early 1930s with the Cant 25 AR, single engine bi-plane flying boat with folding wings. In mid to late 1937, the Ro 43 IMAM folding bi-winged float-plane replaced the Cant 25 AR. This aircraft operated from all of the heavy cruisers throughout the duration of Italy's participation in the Second World War. Generally, the following number of Ro 43 aircraft were carried aboard; Trento class - 3, Zara class - 2, and the Bolzano -3, as well as spare parts aboard all ships.



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PMB 224, 9175 Kiefer Blvd., Sacramento, CA. 95826-5105  
(916)368-2610 • Web Site: [www.shipcamouflage.com](http://www.shipcamouflage.com)

*Note - All Italian Navy and other naval paint reference is from paint chips sold from S & S Enterprises.*

### Getty Images

200 Hudson St. New York, NY. 10013  
(646)613-4000 • Web Site: [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com)

### U.S. National Archives - Archives II

8601 Adelphi Rd., College Park, MD. 20740-6001  
(301)713-6800 • Web Site: [www.nara.gov](http://www.nara.gov)

### U. S. Naval Institute

291 Woods Road, Annapolis, MD. 21402-5035  
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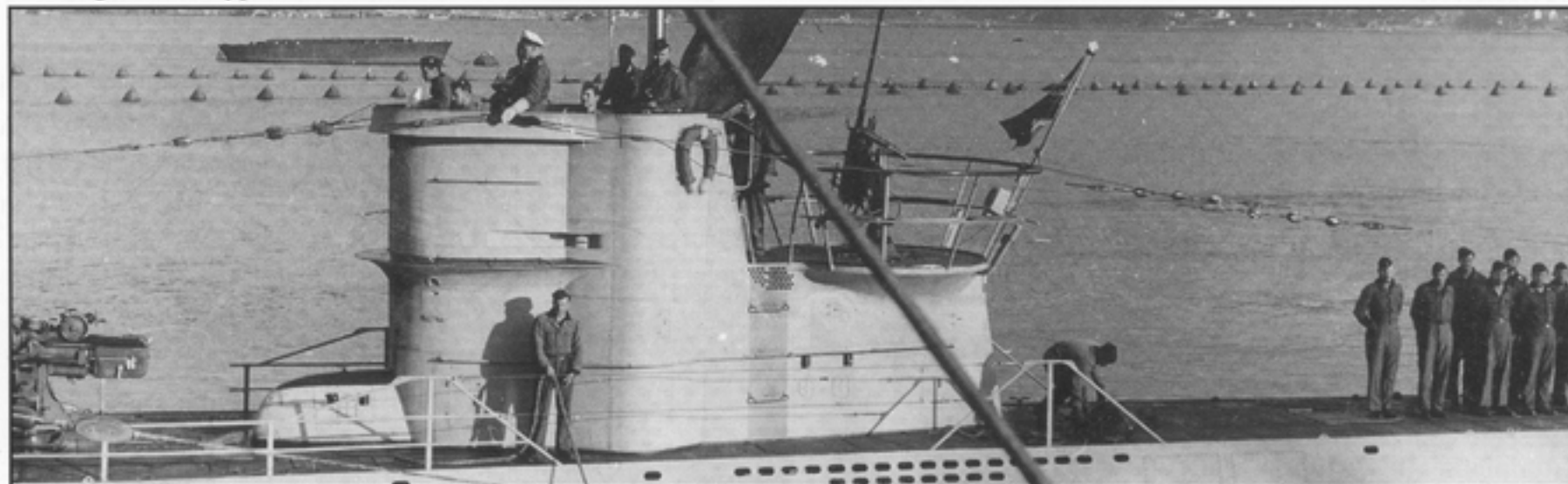
### U. S. Naval Historical Center

Building 57, 805 Kidder Breese St. SE  
Washington Navy Yard, Washington DC, 20374-2571  
(202)433-2765 • Web Site: [www.history.navy.mil](http://www.history.navy.mil)

**Front Cover:** *IRN FIUME* firing a salvo from her forward main gun turrets during the naval parade hosted by Benito Mussolini for Adolf Hitler on May 5, 1938 in the Gulf of Naples.

**Back Cover:** *IRN ZARA* on May 5, 1938, also in the Gulf of Naples. The Italian heavy cruisers performed target practice for the dignitaries while steaming by at high speed.

*Below is an image from Warship Pictorial #27 Kriegsmarine Type VII U-boats.*



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**Don Preul & Jeanne Pollard**  
**Steve Barker • Bill Giordano • Alan McGivern**

*This book is dedicated to -*

**Gerlando Modicamore**

*Fiume veteran who died prior to completion of this book.*

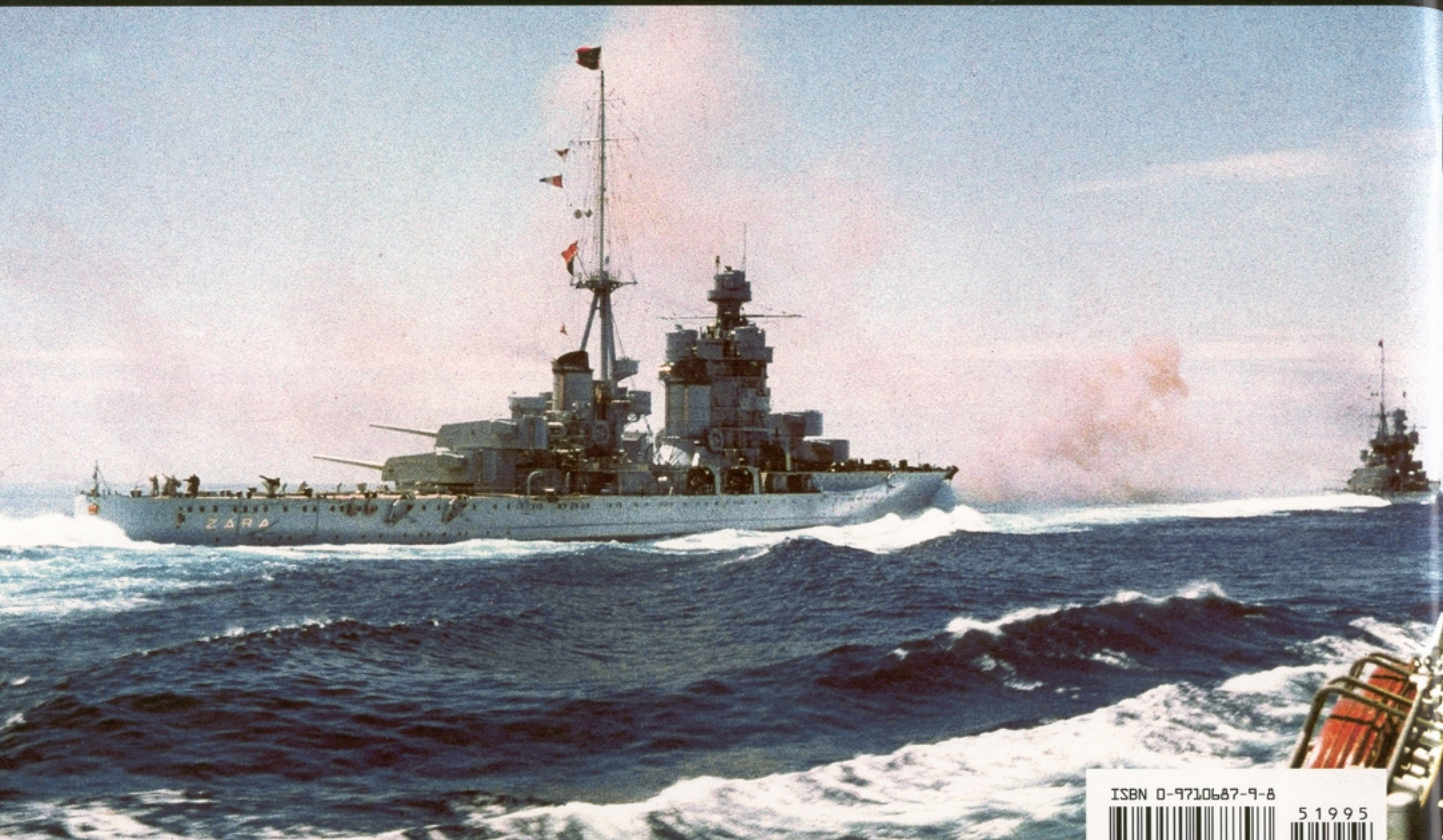
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